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# MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE WEST

Kshitish Chandra Banerjee

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*the Near East* contain the most thrilling experiences of my tour and my impressions of the Far East and the Near East respectively. Happily enough, my tour in Europe has been without an accident.

In conclusion I must offer my heartiest thanks and gratitude to all my friends, admirers and well-wishers who had helped me in so many ways during my tour in and out of my country.

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AUTHOR

*Born :*

*Feb, 1912.*

## GREECE

While on board a small Greek boat I happened to grow intimate with a German Jew, now a settler in Palestine, who was going to visit the famous International Exposition held in Paris in 1937. I was very inquisitive to know the underlying causes of the Palestine-troubles of which the worst victims were the Jews. Hence I asked my Jewish friend one morning about the conflict going on in Palestine. In reply my friend said, "You probably know, our demand for making our national home in Palestine, the holy land of the Jews, was granted by the Allies after the Armistice. Accordingly, the Zionist Congress collected a huge sum of money for the purpose from the Jews all over the world and thereafter began to encourage the oppressed Jews, who had been and still are being ruthlessly persecuted in different countries of Eastern Europe, to settle there. Thus, the present Jewish colony has sprung up in Palestine. Before our occupation of the place it was a desert tract inhabited only by some poor Arabs. It was an abode of diseases. No industry was to be found and there was practically no arrangement for communication in that part of the country where now stands the Jewish colony. But after the immigration of the Jews from Europe this disease-ridden desert has

become, so to speak, an earthly paradise. We have built up within so short a time beautiful towns and ports. Many industries have grown up and roads have been laid out all around. We have also established many schools for imparting education to all. As a result of the investment of a vast capital by the Jews the economic condition of the Arab labouring class inhabiting the place has become far better than ever before. So, truly speaking, the Arabs have lost nothing from the migration of the European Jews, but it is jealousy and fear of the talent and capacity for better administration of the Jews that have brought about an unwholesome change in the outlook of the Arabs. They apprehend that they may shortly be outnumbered by the Jewish settlers who are swelling in number day by day, and it may ultimately result in the establishment of the Jewish rule in Palestine. And it is due to this inferiority complex that they are urging the British at present to stop the immigration of the Jews. I think, the Arabs are not right to maintain such an apprehension, forgetting that Palestine stands surrounded by Muslim countries. The Jews are a peace-loving people and so they would like to live most peacefully with their neighbours; but if the Arabs persist in creating troubles, the Jews in Palestine must guard their interests at any cost."

It was the 27th of July, 1938, when I took this Greek boat from Beirut in Asia for Brindisi in Europe. I booked a 3rd class passage with food. It cost me

only Livres seventeen [ About Livres six and seventy piastres = £1 ( sterling ) = Rs 13-5-4 ]. For the 3rd class passengers also it had a cabin well equipped with beds.

In the afternoon our boat reached Tripoli, only three hours' journey by boat from Beirut. It is a small port of Lebanon. It is rightly proud of its charming background of green hills guarding the coast of Lebanon, the Switzerland of the Near East. After about an hour's halt the boat moved on and touched at two other small ports of the country the same evening. At our dining table we were always six of five different nationalities—Indian, German, Italian, Greek and Syrian. We had already become very intimate with one another. Much of our time we used to spend in discussion on social, economic and political conditions of our respective countries. As we all knew English, it was not difficult for us to understand one another. My Italian Fascist friend, though the youngest of us all, was very intelligent and clever. He was a young man of refined taste and broad outlook. He was a linguist too. He could speak fluently Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Italian, French and English. He knew also a little German. He was a student of the famous Hebrew University of Palestine. He was now returning to his native land to enjoy the summer vacation there.

The food supplied by the authorities of the boat was not bad. It consisted of bread and butter, some

soup, one vegetable-curry, some meat or fish and fruits. For our breakfast we got some bread and butter and green tea. In Greece also as in most of the countries of the world tea is prepared without milk.

As the 3rd class cabin was too warm, I used to spend almost the whole day either on the 2nd class deck or on the officers' bridge. The Greek officers were very liberal and courteous. They would not object at all to our staying on their bridge. In no ship belonging to a non-Greek company are the passengers allowed any access to the officers' bridge. The first evening of the voyage while reading a book on the bridge I happened to meet an American girl of Jewish origin who approached me to ask if I were the very same man who had been travelling round the world and whose cycle she had seen on the deck below. Thus, she began her conversation with me. Understanding that I am an Indian she immediately told me that she had read a number of books on India, one of which was "*Mother India*" by Miss Mayo. Then she asked me several questions, all regarding social conditions in India. After hearing me she said that all that she knew of India were quite the opposite. "Then, India is greatly misrepresented in America," said my friend almost in the same breath. Soon the topic was changed and we began discussing Indian politics. In course of the conversation she asked me to explain the meaning of 'Passive resistance', 'Non-violent Civil Disobe-

dience' etc. She made haste to add, "Mr. Gandhi is greatly loved by most of the Americans, but they still know very little of his manifold activities and his doctrine of "non-violence". The girl had been travelling for some time in the Continent and in the Near East. She was now going to Greece.

Early next morning our boat reached Cyprus. When I woke up, I found the boat standing alongside the wharf of Larnaka. Immediately I dressed and approached the passport officer for a permit to land there, and I had it without delay. On landing I met my Italian friend who also was going to visit the town. As the boat would be staying there for an hour and a half only, we both hired a horse-cart for only thirty cents to have a circuit round the town.

Although Larnaka is the biggest port of Cyprus, the town is very small; it has a population of about twenty thousand. The roads are all asphalted and on either side of them are found rows of small buildings. There is a big fort here. The town is kept quite neat and clean. The population of this island is some four hundred thousand. It is inhabited by Muslims, the Christians forming a small **Cyprus** minority. It is a British colony lying in the heart of the Mediterranean. The land here is not so fertile. It grows mainly potato which is exported to the distant countries of the world. It is some years back that the people of this small island, I learnt,

rose in revolt against the British rule, but met with little success. It could not much embarrass the Government. The rising was almost immediately suppressed. At present there is no movement whatever going on in this island for independence. Indeed, they can't remain independent even if the British leave them to their fate.

We came back to our boat just before it weighed anchor. Late in the day it visited two other ports of the island for potato. Our boat was running along the coast and hence we could have a distinct view of the small villages lying here and there. It is a flat island. Though in the Mediterranean it can hardly boast of a lovely scenery. Its people seemed to be very poor. This became apparent from the wretched condition of their houses within view. In the evening the boat left the island for Greece.

The sea was unusually calm and the voyage was exceedingly pleasant. The passengers, young and old, male and female, were all jolly and cheerful. The kiddies were running to and fro and making merry on the deck. I also was whiling away much of my time in chatting and playing with those friends with whom I had meanwhile picked up acquaintance. The friendly behaviour of these Europeans, their frankness and their liberal outlook—all together simply charmed me and made me feel as well how I had done a great injustice to the Europeans by cherishing, as many others of my countrymen do, a very low opinion about



them. Of course, I also was very quick to adapt myself to the changed environments. While with these my European friends I could not really feel that I was in the midst of so many aliens. I became so chummy with them within so short a time that I could not recollect if I had ever moved among my own countrymen at home with greater freedom and cordiality.

Next morning we sighted some distant solitary islands and it brought some relief to the monotony of the scene. With the passage of time more and more islands began to greet us from the right and the left. I began to enjoy the scenery of the distant islands through a telescope owned by a young boy, son of an American Missionary in China, with whom I picked up acquaintance on board the ship. He was a sweet kid who kept smiling all the while. He was now returning to his motherland from China *via* the Continent.

Towards the evening I became very eager to enjoy the lovely sun-set in the sea. I came out on the deck and kept looking at the setting sun. Above were idly floating pieces of thin white clouds on the deep blue sky and below all around was visible an endless expanse of blue water. The sun was quickly going down the horizon. Little by little it seemed to be sinking in the sea and soon the earth was plunged into thick darkness. How lovely indeed it was to see when half the sun had sunk into the sea and the

upper half looked like a huge crimson ball rolling on the water ! When the golden rays of the setting sun fell on the distant islands and were playing on the thin clouds above, I sat spell-bound and lost myself in the contemplation of the beauties of Nature.

Late in the evening our boat reached the Greek coast along which it was making headway towards Piraeus. The entire coast is guarded by mountains. They were glittering with innumerable electric lights which were speaking of the localities there. It brought to me immense pleasure and joy and I was simply charmed to see the scenery. I now saw

**Piraeus** even before setting foot on the soil of the

Continent how advanced the Europeans are in different spheres of life. However, at about nine the boat entered the harbour of Piraeus. While on board, I was told by my Greek friends that it was the most beautiful and the biggest port after Marsailles on the Mediterranean, but it is a pity that I was not at all impressed to see its beauties. Indeed, as regards its largeness, no one can question it. It can accommodate a good number of big and small ships.

All passengers were now called to appear before the passport officer who came on board just after the boat had touched the pier. The officer sat in the 2nd class smoking room. The room was packed to its utmost capacity and so also was the deck before the room. Every one of the passengers was anxious to be the first to take a permit for landing and hence the

tremendous rush. I came to understand now that the Europeans were no better than the people of the Orient in the matter of discipline. My friends—the Italian Fascist and the German Jew—could not succeed in entering the room even after half an hour's pushing. Then I asked them in joke to push a little strongly with cries of "Hail Hitler and hail Mussolini" and assured them of a clear way for their entrance. It caused a laughter in the crowd. I also thought it foolish to stand inactive in their midst. Now I became active. I pushed strongly and made my way through. Some people asked me, "What are you doing? What are you doing?" I simply answered, "I am going to the Land of Mussolini." Without paying any more heed to their cries I made my way to the room and there found myself comfortable under an electric fan. After sometime I appeared before the officer who examined my passport and allowed me to land. He enquired of my fund. I replied and he entered the fact in his book and gave me a receipt. There came a Government moneychanger from whom I bought some Greek money; as in Greece also foreign money has to be bought or sold in the Government Banks only and not anywhere else. In this connection I remember a very interesting incident that had taken place the previous day on the boat. A young German Jew, very orthodox indeed, enquired of us if we could sell some Greek money to him. We all refused, as we had not much money.

Some young Greeks who happened to be there advised the Jew to wait till next day when he could change his money at Piraeus. Unfortunately the next day was a Saturday which is the Sabbath day of the Jews. And so the orthodox Jew took it seriously and thought that they had purposely wounded his religious sentiments by asking him to transact business on Saturday. He grew angry and could not control himself. He began to abuse them in slang and this led to a regular quarrel.

It was past ten when, accompanied by my friends, Italian and German, I landed there. While we came out of the harbour, we met two American Jewish ladies with whom we had made acquaintance on the boat. They were going to Athens. As they felt considerable pains to carry their luggage themselves, they did not feel the least scruple to seek our assistance which we, of course, gladly rendered them, but it set me seriously thinking as to why they were of such nature. We walked with them to the station which lay about a mile off from the place. Although the trams were still available, these miserly Jews did not care to take any. The clock struck eleven when these our new friends got into an electric train ready to depart for the capital of Greece. These trains consist of several 1st and 2nd class compartments. The seats in them are all cushioned. Every compartment has a door which automatically closes when the train moves, and so accidents do not occur

at all. The fare is not much. It is only five *Drachmas* [ About 528 Drachmas = £1 ( sterling ) ] for a trip to Athens from Piraeus by second class. There is no electric wire over the railway. The trains run by electricity generated through collision between the wheels and the rail. However, after seeing the ladies off we left for our boat. We began to walk along the principal roads instead of going by lanes and by-lanes. Meanwhile a Greek came to us and introduced himself as a hotel representative. He was following us from the station and was requesting us all the while to put up in his hotel. He did not also fail to tempt us to make up our mind to stay in his hotel. He went back at length sorry and disappointed when I sternly warned him not to follow us a step further.

Early next morning we changed the boat and caught the "Kifalani," another boat of the same company, bound for Brindisi, as the former boat was destined for this port only. Kifalani was a small boat. It had no cabin for the 3rd class passengers. They were accommodated on the wooden deck too dirty to be described. And so I could not even imagine how the Europeans, who seem to be so clean, at least in appearance, could travel on such a deck. However, after keeping my suit-case in a place of safety I left the boat for a visit to Athens. Athens lies about ten miles away from Piraeus.

Piraeus is a small town. On its back stands a small hill. The streets and lanes are all asphalted, but

they are not kept so neat and clean. It contains a good number of huge buildings. For communication there are tramways all over the city. It is the biggest port of Greece.

The road running from Piraeus to Athens is asphalted and hence I experienced no difficulty whatever to pedal to Athens. While cycling along the road I was amused to see some young Greeks following me. After sometime they caught me and requested me earnestly to stop there for a moment. I stopped. After introducing themselves as Press-representatives they asked me a volley of questions—all, of course, centring round my own self. I had to stand at last, much against my wishes, before their camera, after which I was allowed to proceed. On my right and left lay green wheat fields and in many of them were found engaged peasants, both male and female. Many of them were cheering, some by waving hands and some by hats, to see me cycling along the road through their fields. I was, indeed, a **Athens** curiosity to them. Amidst this scenery I pedalled on and soon reached the Capital. In the outskirts of the city I came to a big junction of roads and there I stopped for a while to enquire what road to take to go to the University of Athens. I asked a policeman about the way, but he couldn't follow me, as he was utterly ignorant of English. Then I enquired of some passersby, but they also could not fare much better. Now, without

waiting here any longer I rode my bike and began to proceed along the biggest road. After sometime I asked again, and this time a shop-keeper, about the University, but he made a peculiar gesture at it. I moved on from the place and approached another. This time I caught hold of a right man. He knew English and so he understood me perfectly well. I followed his direction and soon came before the imposing building of the University. Its lovely statues and paintings on the walls attract sight of the visitors. I entered the building. While I was glancing over the rich decorations on the walls, a young student approached and asked me very courteously if he could render me any service. For this I conveyed to him my heartfelt thanks and gratitude. He then took me round the halls and rooms bearing old paintings and architectures of high standard. He took me also to the University-library, said to be the biggest in Greece. It was housed in the same building. I was introduced by this my new friend to the librarian who very kindly showed me round the library. It contains many rare ancient manuscripts. Next I visited another building of the University which stands in the same compound. It is decorated with oil paintings of all the Professors and the Presidents of the University. There are some works of the great sculptors of ancient Greece exhibited in this building which have made it all the more worth visiting. From the University I went to the Zoological garden and thence to several Art museums.

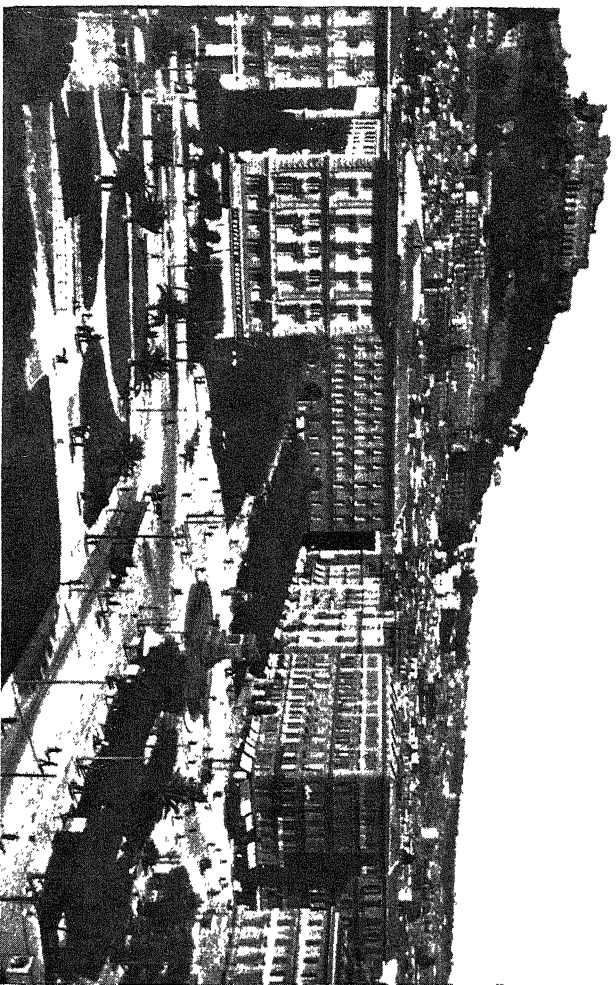
All the while my new friend was accompanying me. At last I came to visit the National Museum of Athens. It cost me fifty Drachmas to enter it. Indeed, in almost every museum in Athens the entrance is regulated by tickets. The National Museum is not so big, but it contains a collection of works of the famous sculptors of Greece which tell us of the old Greek civilisation and of the achievements of the Greeks in the art of sculpture. And these works alone attract a large number of tourists and visitors from far and near. In front of the Museum lies a garden full of big shady trees. After visiting the museum we came to the garden and took rest on a bench in a solitary place. But we could not enjoy the stillness of the place for long. Soon there came a youngman who chose his seat by my side. After a little while he broke his silence and asked me, of course, politely, of my nationality and thus began conversation with me. He was a native of Cyprus. He was studying in the University of Athens. Truly speaking, I was not so happy when he first took his seat by my side, but now I felt really glad to talk with him. We went on talking on diverse subjects—all regarding India. He was very much interested, I was told, in reading books on India—her culture and civilisation, her religion and philosophy, her mountains, rivers and forests. In course of the talk he said : “Though a Christian by birth, I strongly believe in rebirth as the Hindus do.” After a pause for a moment he said again : “I always feel that I have an Indian



element in myself and also feel that I was born an Indian in my previous birth." He further added : "I like Indian philosophy more than any other philosophy, and sincerely speaking, I love everything Indian from the bottom of my heart." In course of our conversation he enquired of me about the books which could tell him about *Karma Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* etc. I was very much astonished when he revealed : "You see, I have got an Indian *Guru* who guides me in every sphere of my life." Now I became very curious to know more about it, and hence I asked him how and where he had found his *Guru*, to which he replied, "I have neither seen my *Guru* yet, nor has anyone told me of his name, but I have seen my *Guru* many times in dream and I always feel his presence. He lives in Tibet. I am at present very anxious to see him. And so I have decided to leave for India to find him out after completing the course of higher studies in this University." Thus we went on talking. At the close of our talk he asked me several questions regarding Indian mysticism. The belief that the Indians can perform many miracles is widespread even in Europe and hence I was asked in many other places similar questions on the subject.

It was about 2. P. M when I and my former student friend entered a big restaurant for lunch. There was a tent on the footpath just outside the building, under which were placed chairs and tables for the use of the customers. It is rather a fashion in Europe to

build tents on the footpath in front of the restaurants and to serve the customers there. The Municipal authorities do not at all object to it. We also took our seats in the tent. I asked a waiter for a plate of rice with meat while my friend ordered for some bread, meat and *macaroni*. Macaroni is prepared with wheaten paste, it is formed into long slender tubes. It is the favourite food of the Italians. Indeed, I could not much relish when I first took it. As the waiter was taking much time to serve us, we began to look over a newspaper. In fact, I could not pay much attention to the paper in my hand, as, all the while hawker after hawker was approaching us in the restaurant. I felt quite disgusted at it, but still I kept my tongue tied. Everywhere in Greece and other parts of Europe the hawkers are always allowed access into the restaurants to carry on their trade and no customer raises any objection. However, after about an hour we were served. I now thought, the Indians alone were not to blame in the matter of prompt service and punctuality, the Greeks and other Europeans also were no better than we in this respect. My friend was simply surprised when I asked the waiter for a glass of simple cold water instead of beer which is an ordinary drink in Europe. In Greece beer is very cheap. A glass of beer sells for only six drachmas. After lunch we had taken about an hour's rest before we left the restaurant after paying up the bill. In Europe also as in many Asiatic countries



Naples, Italy

the customers can stay in the restaurant as long as they wish and hence many vagabonds are found to while away their time in restaurants and cafes in sweet gossip and in playing chess or card. It costs them only two or three cents for a cup of tea or coffee to occupy a place in a restaurant.

Before we got up to leave the restaurant, I had opened a map of the city to find out a way leading to the Observatory. As we were looking at the map, a Greek gentleman came from his seat just to help us to find out the way. He was also very kind and courteous to offer his help to guide us to the address. The observatory of Athens is one of the oldest of its kind in the world. It was about five when we parted after visiting the observatory—I for Piraeus to catch the boat and my friend for his home.

Athens is the capital of Greece. It is the biggest city with a population of about a million. The lanes and streets are all asphalted and they are kept very neat and clean. It abounds in cinema-houses and cabarets, hotels and restaurants. For communication there are trams, motor-buses and underground electric trains. The city with its innumerable palatial buildings and parks presents a lovely picture when viewed from the Acropole ( Acropolis ) of Athens. This beautiful city has played the most important role in the history of the civilisation of Greece from the earliest times. Although the present city is a modern one, one still finds traces of the ancient Greek

civilisation in her old buildings, paintings and statues which show the mastery her artists and sculptors once attained in the world of art and sculpture.

As I got on board the *Kifalani* at Piraeus, I happened to meet a young girl, Turkish by nationality, who sought my help for finding out a suitable place for her. It was indeed a great pleasure to me to render her help in the matter. I was very sorry to learn that a Greek porter took advantage of her ignorance of the Greek language to demand from her some 160 drachmas for carrying only two very small suit-cases from the Customs' office to the boat. She had to pay the amount, because she could not at all bargain with him due to her utter ignorance of his tongue. In fact, everywhere in Europe as in Asia the people take advantage of the ignorance of the foreigners of their tongue.

The girl, Miss. Mina Urgan, was a graduate of the famous American University of Istanbul. As I talked with her, her broad outlook, her smartness, and above all, her charming manners began to impress me more and more. This sweet amiable young girl elicited from all a spontaneous admiration. She was going alone to Paris to visit the famous International Exposition.

It was a Saturday. There were about twenty ships on our right and left—all bound for different places in Greece. Every boat was packed to its utmost capacity with mostly Greek passengers who were

going on a holiday excursion. Every face beamed with joy. No sign of worry was visible on any face. Everyone looked full of life. From this picture I turned my eyes to India and saw only pale faces of the employees who can hardly afford to enjoy their holidays. We, the Indians, have to work more at home and have to worry more for our household affairs especially during the holidays. I could not help feeling now that we are born only to suffer and live only to worry.

One by one the ships began to leave the harbour. The passengers were waving their kerchiefs in great delight to say good-bye to us. At last our ship moved and soon disappeared in the darkness that was falling fast on the landscape. After about an hour's journey the boat stopped at the mouth of the Corinth Canal that leads to the Gulf of Corinth. A pilot now came on board to pilot our boat through it. There was a green light at the mouth of the canal indicating permission to pass through. The canal, though very deep, is so narrow that every moment we were fearing a dash of the ship against the high mountains which stand on either side of it. It is one of the famous canals of the world showing high engineering skill. And it is by this canal that the way has been made much shorter; otherwise it would take a boat a very long time to come to the Ionian Sea from Piraeus after going round Greece. The canal is not very long; it is about

a mile. At certain places there are bridges over the mountains for traffic. While we were passing through the canal, many young chaps gathered on both sides to cheer us. Somewhere the branches of the trees growing on the mountains touched our deck. It was really a very delightful journey. It took us nearly twenty minutes to reach the Gulf of Corinth where the canal-Pilot left the boat.

Next morning Miss. Urgan called on me to pass some time in my company. We went on talking on different subjects. She was very eager to hear something of my travels and so with great pleasure I spoke to her of my arduous journey. After I had finished my say, I asked her questions to know something of the political history of Turkey. And with pleasure she began to describe in full detail the political events which led to the downfall of the Sultan and the rise of Kemal Ataturk into power. She also related how their great leader Ataturk had to work against innumerable odds to create modern Turkey. I was hearing her all the while with the keenest interest. Her face presented a picture of delight and determination while she was speaking of the political events. She concluded by saying : "We will maintain the dignity and position of our nation at any cost." After speaking about her country she wanted to hear from me something about the life of our revered Mahatmaji. And in deference to her wishes I drew before her to the best

of my capacity a vivid picture of Gandhiji's life. Thus we spent the whole morning and while talking, we managed to forget the difference of our nationality, and within so short a time we became fast friends.

In the afternoon the boat reached Corfu, a small island. It is a charming spot, most beautiful in natural scenery. There stands another small Island, not far off from Corfu. Here I saw a huge British battle-ship. There were several other battle-ships in the neighbourhood of the British war-ship, but they all belonged to Greece. In fact, the Greek ships were much smaller in comparison to the British. However, as our vessel drew nearer the harbour, many hawkers came by small boats to sell dolls to the passengers. And the passengers,

**Corfu** especially the ladies, flocked round them to make purchases. The hawkers were asking high prices for articles, but the ladies would not buy without bargaining. I was watching with great interest the manner of bargaining of the ladies with these hawkers. Quite a long time had slipped away when a friend of mine asked me to keep an eye on my belongings. At once I went to see my things, but alas! my new hat which I had bought just a week ago was missing from the place where I had kept it. I looked for it here and there, but nowhere could I trace it. Meanwhile the passengers for Corfu had disembarked



and so I immediately ran up to the Police officer on duty on board to report the matter, but he did not take it seriously, on the other hand he went to joke with me saying: "It is rather a fashion to-day in Europe to go without a hat and so you should be grateful to the thief who has indirectly rendered you a good service." At this I could not keep myself in a serious mood. I laughed and replied, "Oh, yes! I am so glad to have been able to lose it in this our civilised Europe." It is, indeed, everywhere in Europe that hats and shoes are stolen and pickpockets ramble about. However, without wasting any more time I accompanied my friends to the shore by a *sampan* (country-boat) for a look round the city of Corfu.

Corfu is a small city. It stands on hills. Its streets and lanes are all asphalted and they are kept very neat and clean. It has lovely gardens to boast of. Corfu is the summer-resort of H. M. the king of Greece. Its lovely scenery of hills and the sea and its moderate climate draw in large number tourists and health-seekers from far and near.

After about an hour and a half our boat moved from the harbour and visited two other small ports of Greece the same evening. These ports also appeared lovely for their charming background. The same night while I was enjoying the scenery—scenery of stars on the deep blue sky above and of the vast expanse of blue water below—a young Greek

came and broke the solemn stillness. He asked me in the course of our talk, "Is it true that the Indians can perform many miracles? India is known to us rather as a land of mystery." Without waiting for my answer he went on: "I know, India had a great culture when Europe was in the primitive stage of civilisation, but now-a-days we are given to understand that the Indians are the most uncivilised people. We hear only of riots and murders in India, not of any better news, although many of us are anxious to know something about the real state of affairs of your country." How India is misrepresented abroad! So saying he turned his eyes to me and I did try to enlighten him with the conditions, economic, social and political, of India before and after she was subjected to the foreign domination. On hearing me he heaved a sigh of sorrow and said: "Then your country is greatly misrepresented abroad!" He then asked me: "How is it, my friend, when you all know that an organised propaganda by pamphlets, books and speeches is carried on in foreign countries against the interests of your motherland, you don't make a counter-propaganda to enlighten the foreign public with the real state of affairs in India?" There is no gainsaying the fact that he was hardly satisfied with my reply on the subject.

That very night I became acquainted with a young English Jew, a student in the University of Cambridge,

who was bound for Italy. Sincerely speaking, I formed not a very good impression of him when I had seen him clad in dirty clothes. He had practically nothing with him save a small bag containing some articles of bare necessity. I felt really very sorry when I saw him moving about in the late hours of the night. As he had no blanket, he could not sleep. At last I called him to sleep by me. Of course, I also had no bed worth the name except only one blanket which I had spread. As for the pillow, there was my suit-case. My friend used his overcoat for a pillow and thus we two new friends of different continents passed the night on the same bed.

# ITALY

It was the 2nd August, 1937. The sun was just rising when we were getting ready for landing at Brindisi. Then came in view a big piece of flat land, and some of the passengers who were eagerly looking for cried aloud, "Brindisi! Brindisi!!" And their cries immediately brought there most of the passengers who too became very eager to have a glimpse of the land of Italy. Every face wore an appearance of delight and joy. My joy knew no bounds to see it, as the dream of my boyhood to visit Italy was now going to materialise. But I must confess that I was not at all impressed with the scenery of the land. As the boat approached the Harbour, a big fort attracted our sight. It had a Fascist type of entrance over which were placed two big guns probably to display the military strength of Fascist Italy. This port of Brindisi is small and so it cannot accommodate ships of a very large size. The scenery of the harbour was rather disappointing to me, as I could not find there anything impressive. Small buildings, some demolished, unclean roads and hackney carriages—these were all what I had seen in this part of the city when the boat entered the harbour.

Soon the boat touched the pier and some policemen accompanied the passport officer to the ship. We

approached the officer in the 1st class smoking room for permit. And after about an hour I got it. Now I went to the Customs office to go through the Customs' examination. The Italian officers are always very kind and courteous to the foreigners. I had to fill up here a declaration-form mentioning the articles I had in my possession, after which I was allowed to carry my suit-case, but for my cycle they asked me to furnish either a personal security or a deposit of an amount of *Lires* two hundred **Brindisi** and fifty ( £ 1 = About *Lires* 90 in Italy and about *Lires* 110 outside ). As I was ignorant of Italian, I could exchange no talk with the officers. And hence my English friend, who had passed the previous night with me on the boat, kindly worked as my interpreter here. But for his goodness I would have been in a difficulty to make them understand me. They gave me a receipt for that amount of money and asked me to get back my money for the receipt at the frontier of my exit from Italy.

After the Customs' examination was over, we both left for a tea-house, and after a few minutes we found one, but on enquiry we learnt that only coffee could be had there. And so we moved on and entered another and there we had our breakfast. But even here we could not have tea prepared with milk, because in Italy tea is prepared without milk, but a small piece of lemon is put into it. Most of the Italians prefer coffee to tea. A cup of tea cost

me only two Lires. After paying off the bill both of us proceeded to the Railway Station. I accompanied my friend to see him off. As we arrived at the Station about an hour earlier than the scheduled time for the train's arrival, I went to buy an English newspaper from the stall in the Station. It was a London newspaper. There is no English Daily published in Italy. So long I was practically in the dark regarding the happenings all the world over. Naturally I became very happy to make myself acquainted with the world again.

At the fixed time the train rushed in and the passengers hurried up to get into the train. These trains are of modern type. Every train has a through-passage and so one can visit any compartment he likes even when the train is in motion. By the passage lie small compartments, all equal in size, each accommodating only eight passengers. On every seat a number is fixed. The space allotted to each passenger is enough for him to sit, but not to squat. Each compartment contains a small table and two ash-trays. It has also some hooks on the walls to hang clothes upon. The windows are all of modern style and they are nicely screened. Every room has a door which can be closed. While I was glancing over the compartments, the train whistled and I immediately got down from it after wishing my friend a safe and happy journey. The train now left the station amidst loud cheers of the

friends and relations of the passengers who crowded the platform.

Brindisi is a small town. It is a port lying at the southern part of Italy. Its streets are all asphalted, but not all its lanes and by-lanes. It has a good number of cinema-houses and dancing-halls, hotels and restaurants. The citizens suffer a lot from want of parks and gardens in the town, but they can take their stroll along the sea-side which seems to be the nicest place.

I had to suffer a great deal for my utter ignorance of Italian on the very day of my arrival. At noon I entered a restaurant for my lunch. On the dining table there was a menu written in both French and Italian. As I knew neither, I could not point out in the menu what I wanted when asked by a garcon of the restaurant. I spoke to him in English, but he could not understand even a single word of it. Then he asked everyone of the customers present there if he could follow English, but there was none who had even a smattering of the language. I had, therefore, to come out at last without having my meal. Later on, I entered a smaller restaurant and pointed out in the show-case what I wanted and thus I had managed to take my lunch.

After lunch I lost no time to bid good-bye to the town for Bari. The road was nice, it was asphalted and on its both sides were planted rows of trees. It runs over the plains and hills almost along the coast

of the Adriatic. As I came out of the town, I was caught by a beautiful scenery of fields and villages and hills. The fields in this part of the country present a lovely scene. They are not of square size. They are long, but not so wide. In every field rows of trees are to be noticed. I have been told, they are all fruit-trees and thus they serve two purposes. They bear fruits and the fallen leaves turn at last into manure, increasing thereby the productive capacity of the soil. As I advanced through the fields, I found big water-reservoirs here and there. They are constructed by the government. Water is supplied from them to the surrounding fields when it is needed and therefore the peasants have not to worry much for water when drought prevails. And thus the productive capacity of the fields has been increased and as a result, the economic condition of the peasants has become far better than ever before. And it can be gathered from the appearance of their houses. I was greatly astonished to see their houses while cycling through the villages. At the first sight I could not understand if they were the houses of the poor villagers, because they were all buildings with tiled roofs and they looked quite new.

Towards the evening I was suddenly stopped by some peasants who had blocked my way. I got down and followed them as desired. They asked me a number of questions, but I simply nodded



my head in reply. I could not understand why they had stopped me and asked me to follow them. They took me to a field not very far away from the road, and there they gave me a cane-chair to sit on, after which they offered me a bottle of beer to drink and some grapes to eat. Then they asked me if I were an Indian and on hearing my reply they said with delight, 'India, very good.' And by gestures they wanted to impress upon me that they liked our country very much and that they greatly respected

**Bari** Gandhi and Buddha of whom they had heard.

They were simple villagers. In their appearance and in all their movements frankness was vividly expressed. They showed no sign of shrewdness. I was very happy to meet them, but could not stay in their company for long. In the evening I reached Bari lying some sixty miles away from Brindisi. It is a small town on the Adriatic coast. I stayed here in a hotel for the night. I got a well furnished room for only eight liras per day.

Early next morning, the 3rd August, I left the town for Foggia, reaching there the same day in the evening. Foggia is a small town, but it is a very important railway junction on the Brindisi-Naples railway. There was thin darkness all around when I started on my journey. The town seemed to be dead. I found no one in the streets except some street-dogs who were chasing me barking in their loudest. I had a whip with me to lash on their faces

and I used it mercilessly whenever they had come to bite me.

At sun-rise I reached a small town. I stopped here to take my breakfast in a restaurant. After breakfast when I came out, I found a small crowd round my cycle. Many of them were examining its different parts. As I approached, they greeted me with smiles and moved aside. Some of them appeared quesitive. They were talking among themselves about myself on the spot, but none asked me a question. Without much delay I rode my bike again and while going by a house, my eyes were suddenly drawn by two kiddies, one a boy and the other a girl, who were playing with dust behind the house. Human nature is almost the same everywhere.

At mid-day I came to a big village on the road. Here also I had found a small gathering of boys and girls round myself when I stopped before a restaurant to eat my lunch. When they understood that I did not know even a bit of their tongue, some of them ran to bring an English-knowing friend of theirs.

After the night's halt at Foggia I started for Naples early next morning. It was the 4th August. The whole morning I pedalled without experiencing any difficulty. As I advanced towards the city, I came across higher and higher mountains. It was very difficult, indeed, to cycle along the road running up and down. At many places I had to

walk up. But the tedium of the journey did not much tell upon me, because wherever I had stopped, whether in the villages or in the towns, I was accorded a hearty welcome by the people. And then, the natural scenery also was lovely. At short distances occurred villages and towns and everywhere I had found tea-houses and restaurants. While on my journey, I found many peasants cultivating the mountains by horses. It at once brought before my eyes similar scenes usually found in Japan. As a country Japan is more mountaineous, but almost every inch of the land is cultivated. Not a piece of waste land comes to notice in Japan while many such are found in Italy and in many other countries of Europe.

At dusk after the day's journey when I sighted the city of Naples from the mountain, I felt, indeed, a thrill of joy. The city looked like an exhibition of electric lights of multifarious colours. I forgot for the time being the tedium of my journey and got fresh strength and energy to pedal. It was about eight when

I reached the city. There I put up in a **Naples** decent hotel situated within a stone's throw from the Central Railway Station. I was accommodated in a double-bedded room, each bed costing liras ten only per day. Happily enough, I got my English Jew friend as my room-mate here. But it was regrettable that he could not stay in Naples for a day more. Needless to say, after his departure early next morning I began to feel loneliness again.

Immediately after changing my clothes I came out of my hotel to enter a restaurant. I found a small one on the same street, but it had no showcase and so here also I had the same language-difficulty to experience as I had in other places.

After dinner I began to walk along the street and soon came to the huge traffic-junction facing the Central Railway Station. From this place the tram-cars and motor-buses run to different parts of the city. Beautiful gardens have been laid out here. Many huge buildings stand at this place, housing big hotels and restaurants, bars and cafes, cinema-houses and dancing-halls, offices and Banks. In a word, it is a place where prevails an atmosphere of gay and gaiety after nightfall. It presents a picturesque scene when lights of different colours are displayed in them all after sun-set.

Next morning after breakfast I came out to post some letters for my friends and relatives for whom I had been feeling tenderly for sometime past. And then I went to the railway station to enquire what train to take for Pomprii. At the booking office I asked a clerk, but he made a peculiar gesture to mean that he knew no English. Now, I could not understand whom to ask. Then came there a young man to purchase a ticket. I approached him. Fortunately, he had a fair knowledge of English. He hailed from Malta, a British colony in the Mediterranean. I was told, he reached Naples the same morning from his country,

but he was not altogether a stranger to that city. He visited it several times before, and so he knew much of the city. Therefore I did not put him to a serious trouble by asking him about the trains for Pompil. He gave me to learn that there were several Railway Companies running trains to the historical city and that in each case train-fare varied. The cheapest fare for a return-ticket was five lire only. Within a few minutes we became so chummy that we indulged in jokes. He accompanied me to a small station not very far from my hotel. He did not leave me until I had left the station by an electric train. These trains are small and they look no better than a tram-car. Trains are available for the ruined city after every half an hour.

The train was running at a good speed and it was halting at every station for a minute or so. The stations looked very neat and clean. In many of them I found gardens. The quarters for the railway-staff are so beautiful that the Indian employees can not possibly dream of it. The scenery of the villages and fields through which the train was running was simply charming. There were lovely vineyards on our right and left to greet our eyes. It was grape-season and therefore every vine was burdened with bunches of reddish grapes. It grows in abundance in Italy and it is cheap too. When the train arrived at the outskirts of Pompil, it took me no time to understand from the rocky soil of the place in the

midst of fertile unrocky soil what a damage the Vesuvius had caused by its eruption to the life and property of the place. Owing to the fall of lava the earthen soil of the place has now turned into rocky soil and no vegetation grows there.

After about half an hour's run the train reached Pompeii. Coming out of the station I entered a restaurant after which I passed through the town to the ruined city. It is a small town grown up outside the walled city of Pompeii. But even in this very small town there are trams and motor-buses. The most imposing in Santuario is the building of the famous cathedral whose huge cross on the tower and the bell attract sight of the visitors. I walked

**Pompeii** straight up the road by the church to the foot of the small hill on which stands Pompeii.

There is a big restaurant here. Without stopping anywhere I began to ascend the hill along the asphalted road leading to the entrance-gate of the city. On both sides of the road there were shady trees and at certain places there were benches for the visitors to rest on. Near the gate beautiful gardens have been laid out. It costs one only five liras for an admission-ticket. I passed through the modern gate to the old gate of the city. The gate looks like a long tunnel. At present electric lights have been installed, so that the visitors may not find it difficult to see their way. There is a flight of steps leading to the principal road. But before reaching the road

one finds a museum housed in a fairly big hall by the right side of the passage. In it has been preserved some important things belonging to the old days of Pompeii. It has two or three corpses very carefully preserved. They have turned into stone to-day. They speak a very pathetic story of their death. After paying a cursory glance over the things of the museum I came out and walked up the steps to the street. Here I found a number of American tourists who were examining very carefully the bricks of a roofless building. The bricks which were used in the buildings of the city are very thin and they seem to be much stronger than the modern bricks. They have suffered practically no damage yet, although nearly two thousand years have elapsed since the volcanic eruption. I did not stay there for long. I soon moved on and entered a big house on my left. It seemed to be the house of a Noble. It has a big compound. In the centre is to be noticed a small fountain and signs are not wanting to show that beautiful gardens were laid out around it. Then, the rooms of the building look exactly like modern ones. It has also an attached bath-room. There is a *pucca* drain in the house connecting the big drain outside. From this place I went on right down the street, looking over the roofless buildings on my right and left, till I came to a big junction. I turned to left and proceeded on. The streets are broad and they run straight like those of a modern city. They are all

*pucca*, even the lanes and by-lanes were not excepted. It therefore shows that the city was constructed on a plan and that the engineers had always in view the sanitation of the city when constructing buildings and streets and lanes. While walking along the street my eyes were suddenly caught by a building which had a roof on. I entered it. The walls and ceilings of this building bear works of the famous artists of those days. In the same building are preserved two corpses. It is very painful to look at them. Their appearances show that one died while asleep and the other while working outside. The latter had much mud on his body which has turned in the course of time into stone. At one place I saw a dog who became terror-stricken when the eruption of the volcano started, and it is why fright is writ large in all his appearance.

While going by a lane I happened to notice a shop and an unbroken jar therein. In another I saw a kitchen. On the same lane I came across a watchman at the door of a small building which has suffered no damage yet. It aroused my curiosity and I entered it. I found a narrow passage, beside which there were several rooms, all small and ill-ventilated. On the walls there were ugly paintings of men and women portraying the condition of the brothel-system of those days. And in every room I found a cot of bricks, on which was spread a mat. It shows that the brothel-system prevailed in Pompai even two



thousand years ago and that it was looked down upon by the society as it is to-day. Although the visitors are strictly prohibited to pay tips to the watchmen, I paid when approached by him. From this place I went to the compound of the Royal Palace. There was a crowd of foreigners here. They were looking at the Vesuvius which has earned the most notorious name by destroying the flourishing city of Pompeii. It lies about six miles away from the Vesuvius. The Vesuvius has two craters always emitting white smoke. I was told by a guide, it is the smaller crater that destroyed the city in 79. A. D. Looking at them I shuddered to think of the fate of the villages and towns that have grown up round them, in case any such eruption occurs again. I visited next a theatre-hall. Here I was happy to meet a fellow-countryman of mine. He hailed from Guzrat. He halted at Naples *enroute* to India from England where he went to study. We then moved together and visited several buildings. On some of the walls we found lovely paintings. Thick glasses have been placed upon them, so that they may not be spoilt by any wicked visitor. Tired and fatigued we reached the famous Amphitheatre. At this time we became very delighted to see a young girl approaching us with lemonade-bottles. The amphitheatre lies at one end of the city. Wild grass has been allowed to grow in abundance in and around it. It is a circular building around a big open compound where all kinds of physical

feats used to be held. The galleries for the visitors look like modern ones. It suffered no damage at the volcanic eruption. There is probably no city other than Pompai in the whole world which has been excavated with so much caution and preserved with so much care. It is an eloquent testimony to what Mussolini and his Government have done for the excavation and preservation of all historical things in Italy. While visiting the ruined city I could not help feeling that Italy was worth a visit for Pompai and Pompai alone.

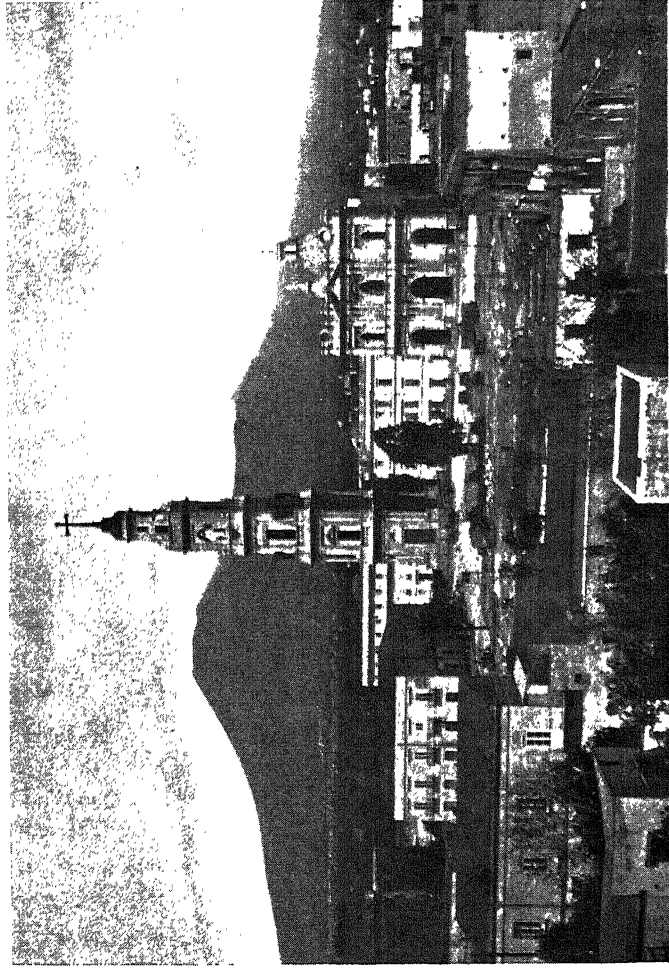
On returning to Naples I went to see its museum. It is not a big one. I enjoyed the evening on the sea-side, but was not much impressed by it. To speak sincerely, I failed to understand even after visiting the whole of Naples the significance of the popular saying—‘See Naples and then die.’

Naples or Napoli as it is called is a big city and an important port. It looks beautiful from a distance. It has a lovely hill on its back, but lovelier is the sea facing the city. Its streets and lanes are not so neat and clean.

The following morning—it was the 6th August—I left for the Capital of Italy. After about an hour’s cycling I stopped at a wayside big village for breakfast. As I got down to enter a cafe, I found myself amidst a curious crowd of young boys and girls. They were possibly drawn by the signboard of my cycle which introduced who I was. I noticed, some of them were

whispering: 'Abyssinian', while others were immediately correcting them by saying: 'No, Negro.' Thus when they were talking among themselves, I entered the cafe to eat my breakfast. After breakfast when I came out, an aged gentleman approached me to ask if I were an Indian and had been travelling round the world. After a short reply when I was about to ride my bike, they gave me a Fascist salute and I acknowledged with joy their greetings to an unknown friend. Such affectionate behaviour greeted me wherever I had gone and it is why I could cheerfully bear all troubles and tribulations of my arduous journey.

The road was excellent, but the way was mountainous and so it was very tiresome to pedal. The weather was fair in the morning, but it turned cloudy towards the evening. I was in a vast field when it began to rain cats and dogs. My clothes were drenched and I was shivering from cold. At last I found a barn to take shelter in at the end of the field beside a small village. When I was thinking seriously where to go and pass the night, I saw a lady coming towards the store-house. I became afraid to see her lest she should be so unkind as to turn me out in the rain. Soon she came and saw me from head to foot and then asked: "Are you an Indian?" "Yes, I am", said I in reply. Again she asked me: "How and why you have come here?" I replied and she was pleased with



Vesuvius and Pompeii  
Italy

me. Then she asked me to accompany her. Now I heaved a sigh of relief. Her house was not very far off the barn. It was a double-storeyed building. After I had changed my clothes, I took a cup of tea to be fresh and warm again. I was very inquisitive to know how she knew English. And so I asked her, and in reply she gave me to understand that she had managed to learn the language while in London. In the course of our talk I was told that she became a widow after her daughter was born. Then I asked her how she was maintaining the family, to which she replied: "You see, I have got some land. It pays what I require, and then I have also some money in a Bank." During our long conversation I made some queries about the condition of the agriculturists, to which she answered: "The economic condition of the peasantry is not the same as before. The standard of living of the peasants has become much higher than ever before and so also their income. Of course, it is true that they can't enjoy amenities of life in proportion to the rise of their income, because the price of things has gone higher with the rise of the standard of living of the people. The productive capacity of the fields has increased, and then, the peasants have been organised." At the close of her talk she paid a glowing tribute to their Duce and said: "You probably know, we were an idle people, but we are no longer so. To-day

every Italian is active and looks smart. Our Duce has infused strength and vigour in our nation and under his able guidance we have regained our lost glory. Our Duce is Italy and Italy is our Duce. We cannot think of any Italy without Mussolini." Now our conversation turned to a different subject, and by the by, I asked her: "Do you endorse the military programme of your government?" In reply she said: "To speak for myself, I do not. I do not like the sort of war going on in different parts of the world. It is not a civilisation, in my opinion, that urges a nation to exploit another for its interests." Thus we went on talking till we were called to dinner.

It was a sumptuous dinner. It consisted of *macaroni*, vegetable soup, some curries, fried potato and roasted chicken. I mixed some vinegar with macaroni to make it sweeter to taste. At last we took some grapes and then tea.

Early next morning I started for Rome. The road was smooth and the scenery lovely. The day was bright, and hence it was very tiresome to travel in the scorching sun. Italy does not appear better than a tropical country in climate. It is very hot in the summer. At mid-day I reached a big village not very far from the capital. I halted there for lunch. Here also as elsewhere I found a small crowd round me when I came out of the restaurant. I wanted rest, but nowhere could I enjoy it. Wherever I stopped, people had flocked round me

and asked me question after question. They were such that they would not stop questioning until I had left them out of sheer disgust. It is a fact that sometimes I was not happy to stand before a crowd ; again, it is equally true that I had often desired a crowd to flock round me during my tour.

To my immense joy I sighted the city of Rome towards afternoon. Now all what I had read of Rome,—her great culture and civilisation, her pride and power,—in books and pamphlets appeared vividly in my mind and overwhelmed me with an unspeakable joy. But the picture which I had drawn in my mind about Rome after study was quite different from what I now saw with my first step into the city.

On arriving at the city I went direct to the Central Railway Station to call at the C. I. T. to enquire about hotels. C. I. T. is the State travelling agency. Before I entered the office of the C. I. T., I

was approached by about a score of hotel-  
**Rome** guides. I arranged with one of them for a room for only ten lires per day. He could speak broken English and that would do, but his colleagues had no knowledge of it. They could speak French and German. Every Italian knows French and in addition he learns Dutch or German but not English, because English is of no use in the Continent.

It was a big hotel named 'Pensione Deodati'. It stood on the Via Pr. Amedio, only two minutes'

walk from the Central Railway Station. I was provided with a small room on the top floor. The rooms and floors were well-furnished, but the rent of the rooms was within the reach of the poorest man. The want of bathing arrangements in ordinary and middle class hotels in Europe is keenly felt especially by those who have a habit of daily bath. Of course, bath can be taken in public bath-houses, but to speak for myself, I would not at all like walking a distance again for bath on reaching a hotel after a tiresome journey, although I might be feeling then much uneasy for want of it. I had, therefore, to be contented most of the days, while in Europe, with mere washing my hands and face and head.

After some rest in my room I came out to enter the tea-house opposite my hotel. In Italy also as elsewhere chairs and tables are placed on the foot-path outside the restaurants to serve the customers there. The street-hawkers are allowed access into them to push their sale. These poor people are not harassed at all by the policemen in Europe as they are in India. However, from this place I went to the Central Railway Station to buy an English Daily from a stall. The station does not look much impressive. At that time several trains were about to depart for different places in Europe. The passengers were running to catch their respective trains. Most of them, even the ladies, were carrying their bags and



baggages themselves. They have imbibed a spirit of self-help in them and they do not consider it beneath their dignity to carry their things themselves as many of us do. Frankly speaking, I had a sense of prestige which always prevented me from carrying even a small suit-case from one place to another, for which I had to requisition the service of a porter. But now my contact with the European young men and women taught me a new lesson which struck at the very root of my false notion of prestige.

The station faces a big traffic-junction. In the Continent the traffic passes by the right, not by the left as in England and its colonies. I crossed the junction to go to a park when all vehicular traffic was stopped by the traffic-police. There was a restaurant in the park. It was crowded. I walked and walked about in the park till I found a seat on a bench by an aged lady. She kept quiet for a pretty long time and then made a query of me in French. We sat silent again when she learnt that I did not know French. It was a lovely site facing the 'Piazza Esedra.' It is a famous fountain emitting jet of water day and night. There are several beautiful bronze-figures in it. On its opposite side stand huge buildings containing stores of fashions and restaurants. A radio was working in a restaurant and I was enjoying it from my seat. Yonder was a kid playing alone with a small ball. Once the ball went out of his control and rolled and rolled down to me. At this

he got frightened, so much so, that he looked like a culprit-boy. He stood sad and pale with a finger between his teeth. At first I did not throw it to him just to see what he did, but when he could not pluck up courage to come for the ball, I threw it. At once he returned to his mood and began his play again.

There was a dance in the same restaurant in which the radio was working. A big crowd gathered on the footpath to see the dance therein. Without much delay I also added to the crowd, but as it looks indecent to keep standing on the footpath, I entered it for my dinner. The dance did not much appeal to me, and so I left the restaurant just after dinner. In Italy as in many other countries of Europe the food-charge in big restaurants does not much vary from that in small ones. In most of the hotels and restaurants in Europe charges for service and plates are charged extra.

The following morning I had to be waked up by the maid when it was about mid-day. She thought something wrong to see the doors of my room closed even then, and so she tapped at the door to see what the matter was. Had I not woke up at her tapping, she would, quite possibly, break into my room. How funny would it be, had it actually happened! It was such a room that even the day appeared as a night in it. It had no window to let in day-light and fresh air. However, I became very sorry being

unable to follow my programme. Without any more delay I came out and after light breakfast I went to the National Museum. It is housed in an old building close to the Central Railway Station. The admission-fee was two liras only. At the entrance-passage my eyes were drawn by two marble statues of nude females. They were several centuries old. There were many other beautiful statues on both sides of the passage leading to a big compound. Around it also are to be found a large number of statues and stones of historical importance. After visiting the ground floor containing only statues and stones I went to the 1st floor of the building and visited first the Art-section. It has a collection of beautiful paintings which point out how the art of painting once flourished in Italy. Then I peeped into the halls and rooms—all decorated with lovely marble and stone statues. This museum has probably the largest collection of statues of different times in Italy. Even a cursory glance over them is enough to convince a visitor about the supremacy the Italians once attained in the world of sculpture.

After lunch I visited two Art-galleries and then the Zoological garden. It lies on hills. The admission-fee for the Zoo was four liras only. It is one of the biggest Zoos in the world. Most worth a visit is its aquarium and bird-section. The aquarium is fairly a large one and the bird-section has a huge collection of birds of different kinds

and of different climates. I visited next the war-museum. It is housed in a building on a hill within the Zoological garden. In it have been preserved swords and rifles, guns and tanks etc. used in wars at different times. In a room of this building several oil-paintings of the Emperors of Abyssinia including that of Haile Selassie hang on the walls. In the same room a big military map of Abyssinia and some press-cuttings drew my sight. While I was looking at the uniforms of several Ethiopian Generals, who died during the last Italo-Abyssinian War, in a show case, an African Negro watchman of the Museum came and asked me in a low voice: 'Ethiopian?' I said: 'No', and he smiled and returned to his post. Probably he took me for an Ethiopian and came to express his sympathy for me.

It was now evening. I left the Zoological garden and moved about for some time in the lovely gardens on the Villa Umberio. It lies close to the Zoo. The place appears as a natural forest and here prevails absolute calm and quiet. It is away from the busy quarters of the city. It lies outside the wall which once surrounded the city of Rome. Some portions of the wall are still in existence. It was built of massive stones.

Next morning after breakfast I called at the General Post Office for letters which I was expecting from my friends and relatives. It is inexpressible

how one feels when he receives letters from his near and dear ones after a very long period. It was always very difficult for a foreigner like myself, who knew not the local language, to find out an address in a big city. I had to feel a lot of troubles everywhere. In Rome also I suffered a great deal. While going to the Post Office I asked numerous persons for direction at every piazza, but some of them were of such nature that they felt no scruple to show me quite an opposite direction and hence the trouble. However, from the post office I went to the British Consulate, not very far off, to enquire about some Indians, but it was a pity that the consul refused to tell me the addresses of some of the Indians. At last he gave me to understand that I could meet some of my countrymen in the Collegio de Propaganda Fide. The college was already closed for the summer and so the Indian students were out of the city to enjoy the vacation in different parts of the country. Then I left for the St. Peter's Cathedral. I passed through Piazza Colonna, a magnificent piazza, and along the Via Dei Coronarl to the bank of the Tiber. The river is very narrow and does not look bigger than a canal in Bengal. It flows through the city. It is shallow, but both the banks have been built up with stones. At short distances there are bridges over the river. After crossing the Tiber I to turned to left and proceeded on. I happened to pick up acquaintance on the way with a young Italian who also was going towards

the same. In the course of our short conversation he spoke very highly of our Gandhiji. To most of the Italians Mahatmaji is the hero of India who has been carrying on a relentless fight for freedom. They have high regard for him and he is compared with their Duce.

Soon I passed by a huge edifice. It has lovely statues which do not escape notice of the passers-by. It is the castle St. Angelo. Without a stop I went on right down the street leading to a piazza. It faces a huge old building. It is the St. Peter's Cathedral. Near the fountain hundreds of pigeons were at play, thus presenting me a very familiar scene. The exterior of the Cathedral is such that it does not and cannot impress anyone. Moss has gathered and plaster has decayed here and there on the walls as is the case with any old building. Sincerely speaking, I formed a very low impression about this famous church from its outer appearance, but I was soon disillusioned. As I entered, I was simply charmed with its wonderful architecture, magnificent marble statues and beautiful ornamental designs in golden colour on the ceiling. This splendid masterpiece of art set me seriously thinking if it were possible for the greatest architect of the present century to build it. The interior is simply a dreamland. It is the biggest church in the whole world. There are nearly two hundred marble-statues

of life-size around the hall. The hall is divided into three by pilasters ornamented with portraits of the Pontiffs. The interior of the huge dome is decorated with mosaics representing Christ, the Virgin and the Doctors of the church. The Altar in the middle of the hall has a beautiful bronze-canopy, a work of Bernini. From the end of the central hall the majestic bronze statue of St. Peter, a work of the 5th century, commands. This church was built by Constantine, the emperor, on the very spot where once stood an Oratory erected in honour of St. Peter by Pope Anacletus. Nicolas had it rebuilt in the middle of the 15th century. I now recalled my visit to the Taj when I was equally impressed, but I felt pains to make out which was more interesting and impressive. They show two different kinds of art and architecture. Attached to the Cathedral is the Vatican Palace, the residence of the sovereign Pontiff. It is also an old building built in the 5th century. It contains many notable things besides a treasure of artistic works well worth a visit. From this place I went to visit the Basilica of St. Paul, another famous church of Rome. It rises upon the tomb of St. Paul. It was erected by Constantine who had the body of the martyr enclosed in a sarcophagus in which it still remains. In 1823 the church was destroyed by a fire. Then it was rebuilt in 1840. It obtained a unique distinction when it was declared as a national monument in 1870. The

interior of the church forms five halls. The paintings and other decorations do not belong to a distant date. The lustre of marbles and mosaics attracts eyes of the visitors. The mosaics on the principal arch were executed in 440 A. D. There is a shining figure of Christ and below Him are the figures of St. Paul and St. Peter who are offering Him a crown.

It was mid-day when I left for my hotel after visiting the Basilica. To cut short the way I went by lanes and by-lanes. The lanes in Rome are kept very neat and clean as the streets are. They are not asphalted, they are paved with stones and bricks. No dust-bin full of refuse and spreading a bad smell came to my notice anywhere in the city. The litter-boxes are cleaned a number of times a day and the citizens themselves help the authorities to preserve sanitation by not throwing refuse into them much before when they are cleaned. The citizens have developed a good habit of not making nuisance on the streets and lanes. Almost every house has a waste-basket to preserve in all the refuse. But for the co-operation of the public it would be hardly possible for the authorities to keep the city so neat and clean.

After lunch I visited two beautiful monuments, one of Garibaldi and the other of Victor Emmanuel. The monument of Garibaldi was erected in 1895. It bears works of Emilio Gallori. It is a piece of fine artistic work. The other monument was made



by Sacconi, the famous architect. It contains works of the well-known artists of the day. From this place I went to look round the new quarters that have grown up in the outskirts of the old city. There I was attracted by the Mussolini Stadium wherein lies the Academy of Physical Education.

Towards the evening I went to the famous Citta-University. I was very happy to meet some University-students there. They took me to a lawn to pass sometime in my company. There was a German among them who could speak English. He kindly worked as my interpreter. We talked on different subjects. In the course of our conversation they requested me to speak something of my world-tour and I did it with pleasure.

The city of Rome stands on both the banks of the Tiber. Probably, no one knows exactly when and by whom it was established, but according to an old myth, it was founded by Romulus in 753 B. C. The tyranny of the Tarquins led to the establishment of a republic in 509 B. C. Possibly, it was under Julius Cæsar and his immediate successors that Rome rose to the pinnacle of glory and was fitly known as the 'Mistress of the World.' During the reign of Constantine Christianity was established, and from that time onward Rome became the centre of a new religious movement resulting in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1870 united Italy declared Rome as its capital and the temporal power

of the Pope was restricted to the Vatican. It is a city whose name and fame has resounded in the distant hills and seas throughout the ages. It is a name connected with thrills and adventures, culture and beauty.

Modern Rome bears nothing save some piazzas and monuments and museums to tell about their golden age. To-day its everything—its streets and lanes and buildings—is modern and contains very little of their historical past. But thanks to Mussolini and his Government, many things of historical importance have been excavated and preserved from utter decay. But for his efforts Italy would have lost much of its grace and importance that draws visitors from the farthest corners of the Globe. The most attractive of all in Rome are its lovely piazzas, monuments and statues which express eloquently its great culture, art and beauty. The population of the present city is about a million. The city has been extended. It stands on several hills. The citizens suffer a lot from want of a good number of parks and gardens.

Next morning at sun-rise—it was the 10th August—I left the city for Genoa. Although I had a strong desire to stay longer in Rome, I could not do so, because my pecuniary condition was not such as to enable me to stay at a place for more than a period barely required to visit the places of interest and importance. My motto was : ‘To make the best out of the least.’ How-

ever, as I came out of the city, I found myself in lovely environments. On my right and left there were vineyards and fields. Ahead and back of me there were hills and villages. It was a lovely sight. I enjoyed much when the peasants were cheering me from their respective fields by waving hands and kerchiefs.

After the day's journey I halted at a wayside town for the night. Here I had a strange experience. When I was looking for a hotel, I came across a small gathering mostly of students. As I came into their sight, they stood on the way to stop me. Their faces wore an expression not of delight and joy, but one of anger. I became much afraid of them. I gathered that they had taken me for an Ethiopian and so before I came within their clutches, I made them understand me. It at once changed their appearance. Italy had already established its foot-hold in Abyssinia when I was travelling in that country. I moved about in the Italian towns and cities in constant fear, because there was every possibility for me to be mistaken and assaulted by the Italians who were maintaining a revengeful attitude against the Ethiopians. It actually occurred at certain places. I escaped assault only at the timely intervention of some good men.

The following morning I started on my journey again and stopped at a wayside village at sun-set for the night. Next evening I reached Genoa after three

days' journey. I put up in 'Albergo Europa' at 18 Via Monachetta quite close to the Central Railway Station. I was accommodated in a single-seated room on the 3rd floor. The room was big and well-furnished. It had a nice spring-cot with a bed on. In fact, almost everywhere outside India the guests are provided with beds in hotels, small or big. The rooms and floors of the hotel were carpeted. There was a lavatory-basin in the room besides an almirah, a dressing table and several brackets. Then, on the bed there was a switch of **Genoa** a calling-bell. For such a room I had to pay only ten lires per day. How cheap! Ten lires amount more or less to Rupee one and annas four. It, therefore, serves as an eye-opener to many who hold the view that living in Europe is very dear. I have great doubts if one can enjoy the comforts in India by paying even triple of that paid for the same in Europe.

So hungry I was after the day's journey that I lost no time after changing my clothes in my room to go down by the lift for a restaurant. I asked a waiter for rice and fish, my favourite dishes, but I was sorry to learn that they had no rice in stock, because it was seldom wanted by the customers. Then I asked the manager to arrange for it and he was good enough to do so. He sent a boy immediately to the market for rice and I began to while away the time on a newspaper. After about an hour I

was served and naturally I became very glad to find my favourite dishes after a very long period, but ere long I was disappointed. I could not take my food, because the rice was not even half boiled. When asked why it was so, the cook admitted his ignorance in cooking rice.

Next morning I set out to visit the city. This day I did not take my cycle with me. I went by tram. I travelled about six miles up to the destination of the car, but the price of the ticket was only one lire and twenty cents. Very cheap, indeed! When the tram-car was running up a hill, I enjoyed from it the beautiful panorama of the city. Genoa with its innumerable villas, parks and gardens, spreading over a vast area from the top of the mountain down to the sea, presented a lovely picture.

Before long the car came down the hill and began to run along the sea-coast. Now I enjoyed a different view. It was of men and women taking sea-bath together. Many sea-bathing clubs along the coast drew my notice.

Soon it reached Quarto in an outskirt of the city and passed by a monument on the sea-shore. It is an ordinary monument. It is dedicated to the revered memory of Garibaldi who sailed from this place in 1860 with his gallant legion to conquer and subdue the southern regions of Italy. Again, it is the very same place where Gabriele d' Annunzio addressed a vast gathering in 1915 urging

them to fall in line with the Allies in the Great War, and it was a prelude to the birth of a greater Italy entirely free.

While returning by tram I picked up acquaintance with an American. When he learnt that I was quite a stranger to the city, he offered his service at my disposal, and needless to say, he had my heartiest thanks for his kindness. He had been living in the city for more than a decade and so it was as familiar a city to him as his native. He took me first to the cemetery on the mountain. It is a beautiful cemetery said to be the biggest of its kind in the whole world. From this place we returned to Piazza. G. Verdi for going to the market lying close by. The market, though the biggest in the city, hardly impressed me. It looked no bigger than a Calcutta market and appeared not so clean. Around a big hall there were small shops of varieties of things and in the middle were found mostly women selling fishes, mutton, vegetables etc. The only attraction of the market was the floral shops. While I was accompanying my friend to purchase some bread and butter, most of the people fixed their eyes upon me, as if I were a strange creature to them.

After marketing we soon came out and walked on along the Via XX Settembre, the nicest road in all Genoa. It is broad and runs straight. On both sides of it stand all palatial buildings of the same size, colour and type. It ends in Piazza Deferrari, the

most important piazza from where run straight roads to different parts of the city. There is a big fountain in the centre of the piazza. The superstitious people have a belief, I was told, that one can have his journey safe and happy if he throws some coins into the fountain-water on the eve of his departure. So long I had a notion that we were probably the only superstitious people, but now I saw that superstitious people were not at all wanting among the Europeans also.

Near the piazza there are several important churches of the city. The old palace of the emperor lies not very far off this place. It is an ordinary building which evokes no interest of a visitor. Quite close to the palace stands the University of Genoa which also does not appear very impressive. We visited at last two art-galleries after which we parted.

Genoa or Genova as it is called is a big city lying on mountains along the coast of the Gulf of Genoa. It is a flourishing city and an important port of Italy. The population of Genoa at present stands at 630,679. Its streets and lanes are kept very neat and clean. Beautiful gardens have been laid out here and there, and then, there are lovely piazzas, monuments, museums and art-galleries—all well worth a visit. There is probably no other city in the whole of Italy which can be proud of a better natural scenery than Genoa. It looks like a picture. It is difficult to say definitely when the city came into existence, but everyone knows

that it was established long before the Christian era. It is said that the Ligurians came down to the sea-coast from mountains after giving up their pastoral life and settled there and thus the city of Genoa came into being. During the period of Roman decadence Genoa suffered a great deal from invasions of the Goths, the Lombards and the Saracens. On being free from the French domination it became an autonomous town. In the 5th century the city attained the apex of its glory and power. It was followed by reversal and recover several times until it was annexed to the Roman Empire.

It was the 14th August. Early morning I left Genoa for Turin. Turin lies about 166 kilometres off Genoa. The road was in excellent condition. It runs over the mountains and valleys. This part of the country is more mountaineous than the southern region of Italy. The natural scenery is almost the same. On the way to Turin I found innumerable vineyards on my right and left, and whenever I had stopped near a vineyard, the people working therein approached me to offer reddish grapes of their yards to eat. Often I was overwhelmed with joy to see their sense of hospitality. I came across many peasants on the way. Many of them approached me and tried to exchange ideas by gestures when I had stopped for rest. They became so very friendly with me that they had often drawn my hand nearer theirs just to see how dark I was, and whenever I tried to



explain why we are so dark, they laughed and impressed upon me that they had done so simply to cut jokes. Thus I enjoyed my time while in the villages.

The sun was still in the western horizon when I reached the vicinity of the city. The peasants were retiring from work. On the road I met with some happy peasants who were returning by a horse-cart, some singing and some chatting and

**Turin** laughing. As I was going by them, all their songs and laughs and jokes suddenly stopped and they cast a glance at me expressing surprise. Without a stop I went on and reached Turin at dusk. I put up in 'Albergo Regina', a big hotel on the Via Arsenale.

Next morning some Press-representatives called on me. Surely they were wonderful creatures, otherwise how could they discover an ordinary person like myself within so short a time in a big city like Turin? However, they talked with me for a pretty long time. They asked me first of my thrills and adventures of my tour and then of the state of affairs in India. In the course of our talk they made some queries about the position of Gandhiji in Indian politics, after which I was requested to speak about my impression of their country. Thus I spent the morning in their sweet company.

After lunch I went out to have a look over the city. I was simply charmed to see it so neat and

clean. Its roads are straight and on both sides of them there are rows of trees. In their middle also there are shady trees. Then, modern buildings of the same size, colour and style stand on their both sides. They do not lie congested. Beautiful gardens and lovely piazzas are some of the attractions of the city. Over and above all, the city is kept scrupulously clean, so clean that hardly a blade of grass comes to notice on the streets. There is not a single city in Italy which is more neat and clean than Turin.

Turin has an old university. It was founded as far back as 1720. Annexed to it is the National Library. It was the home-library of Victor Amadeus II who presented it to the university in 1720. Many valuable books of the library were destroyed by a fire in 1904, but still the library has a huge collection of books not much less than half a million volumes. It has many old manuscripts. The museum of antiquities is well worth a visit for its rich Egyptian collection. Both the museum and the picture-gallery are housed in the same building. The picture-gallery was established by Charles Albert. It contains paintings of various Italian schools of different times from the 14th century down to the 18th. It has a nice collection of works of the Flemish and the Dutch schools. The most imposing building in the city is the Mussolini Stadium which with its Marathon Tower can

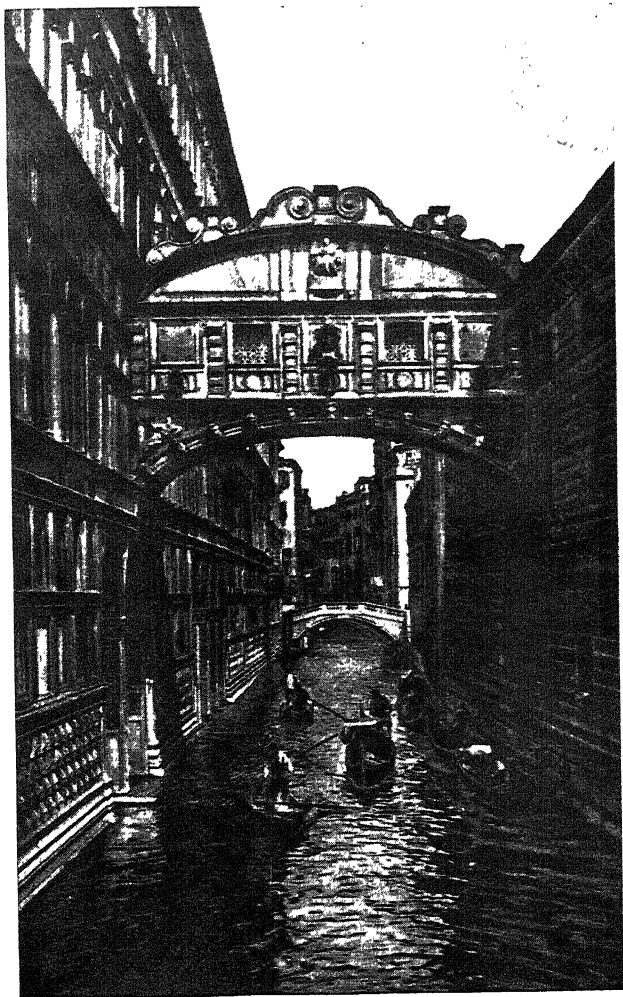
accommodate nearly a lakh of visitors on its huge stands.

Towards the afternoon some students called on me and I was very happy to meet them. After some talks they asked me if I would be so glad as to accompany them to enjoy the evening on the river. Needless to say, I gave my assent immediately to this their delightful proposal, and without further delay we left the hotel. We got a small boat on hire. We were rowing the boat ourselves. I am an expert in the art, because I belong to such a district (Dacca) in Bengal which forms a vast expanse of water during the rainy season when boat becomes the only means of communication there. So every house has to keep a boat and most of the people have to learn the art of rowing.

We were having a very pleasant discussion and while talking we entirely forgot that we belonged to two different nationalities. As I talked with them, their youthful energy and vigour together with their broad outlook and patriotism began to attract me more and more, and their friendly behaviour made me feel at home. Towards the end our discussion turned to World-politics. On surveying the political condition in Italy and abroad one of them concluded by saying: "The gigantic edifice of our empire will soon collapse. It may remain as it is so long our Duce lives. I am sure, his death will be followed by a sort of civil war culminating in the downfall of the

empire. It appears to me that we shall disappear from the world's political horizon just like a comet as we have appeared. We are marching towards a great catastrophe and I think, we cannot escape it. Fascism, in my humble opinion, is not a very sound political philosophy. Of course, I agree that it works well in an unprogressive State where personal jealousies and indiscipline prevail dominant. Under Fascism a State can rapidly progress. I think, Fascism can do a good lot for the progress of a State in every walk of life within a shorter period and at a lesser expense than Democracy can, provided the dictator is not a despot." Thus he summed up his opinion about Fascism. Then, in reply to a question of mine about the political condition in Italy he said : "The opponents of Mussolini are inhumanly treated. His sword always hangs upon his political opponents. We know not what civil liberty means, and many of us feel it bitterly, but we can't help." By this time we came very far and the night deepened, and hence we turned back. It was a lovely moonlit night. There was another boat not very far off ours. From there was floating on to us the chorus of a couple singing to their heart's joy.

Turin is a large city lying on an extensive plain near the confluence of the Po with the Dora Riparia. It is not very far away from the Italo-French frontier. The origin of the city dates back to antiquity. It was



Lovely Venice  
Italy

probably built on the site of a very ancient town called 'Taurine Ligurians' mentioned by Polybius and destroyed by Hannibal in 218 B. C. It became a Latin colony in 65. B. C. and later a Roman colony under Julius Cæsar. It was then surrounded by a rectangular wall. Upon the fall of the Roman Empire Turin was subjected to the domination of the Goths. It lost and gained its independence several times up till 1821 when Turin became united with Italy under the royal sceptre of Victor Emmanuel II. It was once a flourishing city and the capital of a kingdom of its own.

Early next morning I left Turin for the frontier of Italy. The distance is about 160 kilometres. As I advanced towards the frontier, I came across higher and higher mountains. After the day's journey I reached the frontier town at dusk and passed the night in a hotel. The town lies at the foot of a gigantic mountain that forms the boundary-line of Italy and France. I began to eagerly wait for the morning to leave for France. My passport was all right. As a British subject I required no visa in my passport to enter France just as I did not require it for Italy.

# FRANCE

**I**t was the 17th of August. Early in the morning I bade good-bye to Italy and crossed the gigantic mountain to go over to Modane, the frontier town of France, lying on the other side at the foot of the mountain. There is a railway line running through a tunnel of this mountain. It is called Mount Cenis Tunnel, probably the longest tunnel in Europe. So long is the tunnel that it takes more than fifteen minutes for a fast train like Paris Express to cross it. At the mouth of this tunnel stands the frontier town of Italy and at its end lies Modane, the French frontier town. When the train runs through the tunnel, all its doors and windows are closed, so that the smoke of the engine may not enter the compartments to the inconvenience of the passengers. The French trains differ very little from the Italian except that the benches in the 3rd class are all cushioned as the seats in the 1st class are. It is, therefore, as comfortable to travel by a 3rd class as by a first class in a French train. In fact, the 1st class remains less crowded and hence probably it is more comfortable to travel by the highest class. As soon as I came to the French side of the mountain, I found myself in quite a different atmosphere. I cast a look over the villages and they also appeared quite strange. Their houses presented

an appearance of poverty. It was all a scenery of grey tiled houses showing to the casual visitors the poor lot of the people of this part of France. The type of buildings too is quite different from that of Italy.

Immediately on reaching Modane I called at the railway station to get back my money from the Italian Customs officer. I had it then and there. In this frontier of France too the Customs authorities asked me to deposit two hundred and fifty Francs (£ 1 = About 130 Francs) for my cycle, and here too they gave me a receipt for the amount and asked me to get back the money at the frontier of my exit. As I had no French money with me, I changed my foreign money in a Government Exchange Bank in the station which remains open all the while for the convenience of the

**Modane** passengers who may have to change money at this frontier. This station is strongly guarded by gens d'armes as the Italian Frontier is. However, after the Customs' examination was over, I entered a restaurant, but the garcon failed to make out what I told him as he knew no other language than his own. Hence I had to leave the restaurant. I entered another, but there too I did not fare better. At long last I found one wherein I met an English-speaking waiter, and so I had no difficulty in taking my lunch there.

It was about mid-day when I left for Lyons. The road is asphalted, and it runs across vast plains, hills



and valleys. The frontier is all mountaineous, but not much so is the interior of the country. As I advanced towards Lyons, I found the road smoother and smoother and at short distances I came across tiny villages. The hills and fields were all green with vegetation and hence the scenery was lovelier. It was a bright day. There was not a speck of cloud in the sky. So it became all the more tiring for me to cycle in the scorching sun. It was too hot a day even for me, a man of the tropical climate. But the very joy of being under a new sun was enough to keep me going.

Towards afternoon I reached a lovely lake surrounded by high mountains dotted with small towns and villages which lend an additional charm to the lake. I saw a number of young people enjoying the lovely evening in small boats. They were all in swimming costume. When they saw me cycling alongside the lake, they began to wave their hands and kerchiefs, and I acknowledged their greetings with a smile. Further on I happened to notice some people fishing in the lake with tackles and it at once brought before my eyes such scenes of my country where fishing with tackles and nets is a favourite hobby of many.

At nightfall I arrived at Lyons, a large city of France, and put up in a decent hotel; the rent of my room was only twenty Francs a day. Next morning I was exceedingly happy to pick up acquaintance with an amiable Hungarian couple who sat by me

to take breakfast in the dining hall of the same hotel. The gentleman was Dr. Csetenyi Andorl, a Judge of the Tribunal in Budapest. He came to France just on a holiday visit. During our conversation he expressed that he was very much interested in Indian matters, particularly Indian philosophy; and, in fact, so intense was his desire to know of India that he assailed me

**Lyons** with thousand and one questions even in that short time. In the course of talk he asked me: "Why are there so many castes among the Hindus and why is a section of the Hindus untouchable? Where is the justification of the fact that those so-called untouchables are not allowed to enjoy the rights which other Hindus enjoy inspite of their professing the same religion?" He then paused a little and said again: "At present we hear much of Mahatma Gandhi's *Harijan* movement, but very few of us know the meaning of the very word "Harijan," and, moreover, we do not know exactly the aims and objects of the movement." Frankly speaking, I was astonished not so much at those questions of his as I was when a man of his intellectual calibre asked me to explain "the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism". I was quite aware of my poor knowledge in Hindu and Buddhist philosophies and I actually confessed it to him, but still I ventured to satisfy him to the best of my ability. First of all, I spoke of Brahminism and the

significance of caste system in Hinduism, and then of Buddhism and its influence over Hinduism. I tried to explain also the vital differences between Hinduism and Buddhism. Lastly I dwelt on the caste system and its harmful effect on the present Hindu society. I concluded by referring to the social works of our revered Mahatmaji who appears to my humble self to be a combination of Buddha, Christ and Mohammed. On hearing what I said he asked : "Is it a fact, my friend, that even now-a-days the widows in India have to die on the funeral pyres of their husbands ?" Just see, how India is misrepresented abroad and how wrongly the foreigners are informed of the present conditions prevailing in the Indian society ! People of some culture who happen to know such vile things as true cannot possibly have a very good opinion about India. He did not rest satisfied by merely asking those questions ; he went to put to me some more, but this time he asked me all about the Indian administration. When I told him about the princely salary and allowance of high officials, he was simply astonished. Now I too was no less surprised when he disclosed to me that although a Judge of long fifteen years' service he was drawing a petty salary of only £ 15 ( About Rs200/- ) per mensem.

After breakfast we paid a visit to several museums and art-galleries. Then we entered a restaurant for lunch. This time I had not to experience any

trouble in the restaurant, as my friends had a good knowledge of French. As the waiter took some time to serve us, my friend purchased a copy of '*Paris Soir*', the most popular Daily of France, just to while away the time. Turning over a sheet, he brightened up with delight and said, "Here is an Indian news, my friend." I at once leaned over, but not a word of it was intelligible to me. So Dr. Andorl began to translate the news into English. As he read the news, it cast a gloom over my face. It was the news of a communal riot in the Punjab, which had resulted in the death of some Sikhs and Muslims. He now asked me : "Why do such riots occur so often in India ?" In reply I tried to explain the underlying causes of such communal riots. Such things, I told him, would possibly be continuing to happen until India attained independence.

The same evening Dr. Andorl and his wife departed for Paris by train. I accompanied them to the station to see them off. All the way Mrs. Andorl was talking with me. She also could speak some broken English. We were talking all about our respective families. So tender was her heart that she was almost moved to tears to learn that I had lost my dearest mother in my boyhood—a loss which I am feeling more and more keenly with years. Soon the engine whistled and I immediately got down from the train wishing them a safe and happy journey. Before departure they assured me of a hearty welcome

if any day I happened to call on them at their house in Budapest. I now returned to my hotel with a sweet, yet sad, memory of my friends and for long I could not help feeling very lonely.

The following morning—it was the 19th of August—I started for Dijon. It is a vast tract of almost plain land across which runs the road towards Paris. On the way there are many small villages and towns, but they lie not very close to one another. Enroute I came across many waste lands, and I failed to understand why they were left uncared for by the people. The entire journey seemed to me absolutely monotonous, and the scenery too was very dull. At about mid-day I became very thirsty and so I stopped near a field and approached the peasants, who were working there, for some water. As they came to me, I made a gesture to mean that I wanted some water. Instantly one of them ran to the other end of the field to fetch a bottle of beer for me. They burst into laughter when I tried to make it intelligible to them that I did not drink wine. Unable to impress on them that I required simple water, I had at last to quench my thirst with drain-water flowing by the field to their great surprise. These peasants were so nicely dressed that they could hardly be distinguished as cultivators if they had not been at work in the field.

Towards afternoon I met two French youths who also were going to Dijon, and I was happy to

accompany them. Their knowledge of English was very poor ; they knew only a few stray English words like 'yes' and 'no'. But even with such poor knowledge they managed to express much of their feelings and this I greatly enjoyed. After the whole day's tedious journey I arrived at Dijon at nightfall, and those two young companions of mine were very kind to find out a suitable hotel for me.

Dijon is not a very big city. It has a famous church. It is also a very big railway junction which adds to the importance of the city. The

**Dijon** streets are fairly broad, but they are not so clean. It has quite a good number of decent hotels and restaurants, dancing-halls and cabarets to cater to the pleasures and comforts of the visitors.

Early next morning I got up to bid good-bye to the city and proceeded to the capital of the country. But before my departure for Paris I paid a visit to the famous church, after which I went about sight-seeing in the city. The natural scenery of the entire country between Dijon and Paris is absolutely dull. In fact, it was all a monotonous journey to me. There is only a flat land between these cities. Villages and towns appear at great distances. Often I would try to break the monotony by talking with the simple villagers on the way. At mid-day I stopped at a wayside town to take my lunch, but instead of entering a restaurant

there I got into a shop to buy some sandwiches and fruits, because to go to a restaurant meant a sore trial for me with the garçons.

Towards afternoon I got fatigued after hours of cycling and so I stopped before a play-ground for rest. Some villagers were playing football. I watched it with keen interest and as I did so, I felt an intense desire to play with them. At this time some of the players stopped their play for a while and approached me to ask if I would be so pleased as to play with them. I readily agreed to their delightful request. After play they took me to a restaurant that lay close by and entertained me with tea. In France also as in Italy tea or coffee is prepared without milk, but sugar is mixed with it. The French people prefer coffee to tea. However, after enjoying their company for some time I started again, reaching Paris the same night. It was dusk when I left them. I reached the capital at about eleven. I was bewildered to some extent to see the vastness of the city and its traffic even at this late hour of the night. The motor-cars in Paris run at such a high speed that they have every chance of meeting accidents. It seems as if there is no speed-limit. Many wonder why cars running at the highest possible speed do not cause accidents very often as is apprehended. However, although very tired, I pushed on and on for some time along the principal roads, but alas ! no hotel came to my notice. At last

I made up my mind to take a taxi and called at the Lyons Railway Station that lay not very far away from where I now came. There I kept my cycle in the cycle-deposit office ; for this I had to pay only one Franc per day. The station, the biggest of Paris, does not look even so big as our Howrah station. After depositing my cycle I got into a taxi and asked the driver to drive to a hotel in the heart of the city. He first took me to a big hotel. On enquiry I came to learn from the clerk that the rent of a small room in that hotel was one hundred Francs a day. It was too much. And so I moved on from the place.

**Paris** I came to another hotel, but there too the charge for a room was very high, and so I could not stay there. As it was the Exhibition-time, all the hotels of Paris were overcrowded by foreign visitors who had flocked by hundreds and thousands from the farthest corners of the world to visit the famous International Exposition, said to be the biggest of its kind ever held in the world. After a long search I found out a middle class hotel on Rue de la Victorie. It has come off Lafayat Street, an important street of Paris. It was 'Imperial Hotel' located almost in the heart of the city. In this hotel a room on the 2nd floor was available for only twenty Francs a day. Since no cheaper hotel could be found, I arranged with the lady manager for my stay there. Fortunately enough, the manager was an English lady. The hotel-boy came and carried my suit-



case from the taxi to my room. I had to pay the taxi driver thirty Francs. En passant, may I mention that taxi-fare in Paris is the cheapest in Europe. One can go a good distance for the minimum charge of three Francs. The meter then registers the gradual rise by a Franc. Most of the people have to make use of a taxi, because porters are not available.

The Imperial Hotel, where I put up, had nice architecture and it was well furnished too. It had a lift to be used only at the time of going up. Its rooms and floors were all covered with carpets. My room, though small, was decent-looking. It had in it among others a nice bed, an almirah, two tables ( one dressing-table and the other a writing-table ), several cushioned chairs, two lights (one of them was a decent table-light ) and a lavatory-basin. And to this list of articles was added a phone. There was a calling-bell too. Then the guests were properly attended to by the maids. My shoes were polished every morning as is done in every hotel in France by the maids, for which nothing had to be paid extra. For such a room one has to pay only twenty Francs ( about Rs 2/- ) a day. How cheap ! It again falsified my notion that living in Paris, the place of aristocrats only, was very dear.

It was about mid-night when I came out to take my dinner. Even now some of the restaurants were open. I entered a restaurant on the Street Lafayat and became very glad to see there an Arab whom I

had taken for a countryman of mine. I took my seat by him. We exchanged greetings by smiles, because none of us had even a working knowledge of the other's language. However, immediately after taking my seat I asked the waiter for some soup, fish and bread with some fruits, but instead, I was served roasted chicken, some slices of bread and butter. Probably he did not understand me. So I took it without a question. But nothing could be more regrettable than the sharp altercation the Arab had with the waiter at the time of paying the bill. The Arab declined to pay the charges for service and plate; probably he was ignorant of the rule. But the waiter would not exempt him from payment of those charges, the result was the passage at arms in their respective tongues. Who could say that it would not have ultimately led to a regular scuffle, had I not wisely interfered in the matter by paying the charges for him myself. Although it irritated him, I did not venture to try to make him understand me. I am, to speak the truth, always afraid of an Arab who, when angry, loses control over himself.

Next morning after breakfast I called at the office of Thos, Cook & Sons Ltd. to cash some Travellers' cheques. It was located at Place de la Madaleine close to the Madaleine Church, not very far from my hotel. As I entered the office, I found a big crowd of visitors of different nationalities, among whom I happend to notice some of my fellow-

countrymen. I was seized with a desire to have a chat with them, but as soon as I approached them, they turned their faces and moved on, pretending that they had not seen me at all, although we had an exchange of looks when I entered the office. It pained me not a little to see this sort of attitude towards a fellow-countryman of theirs in a country, far, far away from their native land. However, I now turned to my own business. Before the counter there was a crowd of visitors, but no indiscipline was to be noticed anywhere. They formed a queue, and no one was found gossiping with the clerk.

On my way back to the hotel I lost my way after proceeding only a few steps from the office. And it is in Paris alone that I had to experience a lot of troubles in locating my hotel almost every day. It often happened that I came to my own street, but still I could not know that it was the very road which I wanted to find out. In the course of my world-tour I had the opportunity of visiting bigger cities, but nowhere had I a single occasion to lose my way as in Paris. It is probably because the streets in Paris being of the same type present a similar appearance. Every street runs straight and ends in a circular place where several roads meet. On either side of each street there is a row of shady trees which lend some beauty to the city. It appears that the city is divided into triangular blocks. Practically no lane is noticed in the city. The build-

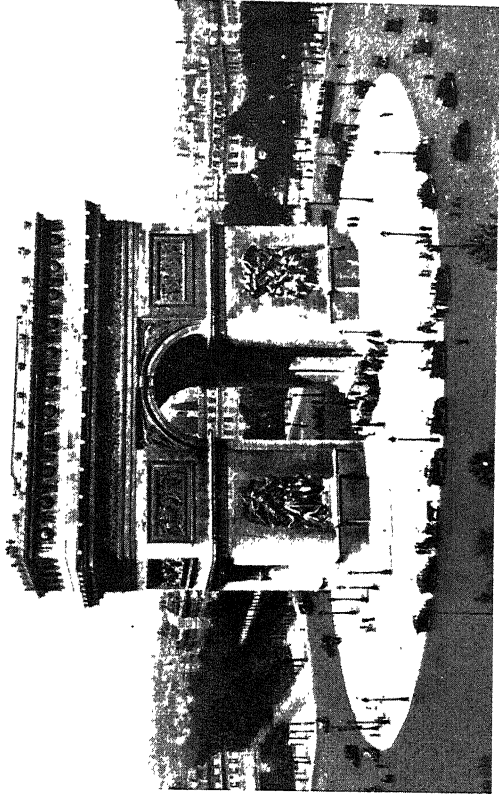
ings that stand on either side of the streets look exactly the same, each being of the same size, colour and style. The entire city appears as a lovely picture. No nuisance, not even a blade of grass, is to be found anywhere in this vast metropolis of a population of more than four million. But still I must take an exception to one thing of Paris viz the public latrine. It is constructed so unscientifically and looks so unclean and indecent that it alone spoils the fair name of the city.

In Paris there is no tramway, there are only underground railways and motor buses. In every part of the city there are railways, and stations lie at very short distances. Close to my hotel there were two stations, namely, N. D. de Lorette and Le Peletier. They were some three or four minutes' walk from my hotel. After lunch I came to Le Peletier to go to Lyons. It is a palatial building. There is a flight of steps leading down into the building. The clerks in the booking office are all women. The price of a ticket is fixed at one Franc only, and it entitles one to travel to any part of the city. How cheap, therefore, it is to travel in Paris by a metro ( underground train ), and it is probably the cheapest in the world. In the stations no visitor has to feel any difficulty whatever to find out his platform to catch the train, because there are names of the stations to be visited by the train written in capital letters on the walls of the passage leading to the platform. However, as I

entered the platform, a train came in, and I immediately got into a compartment. It comprised two or three compartments only. These trains have only one class. And for the passengers there are simple wooden benches to sit on. The trains run at an interval of about ten minutes, and so a passenger does not have to wait long if he misses a train. As the train moves on, the doors close automatically and when it stops, the doors open likewise. Hence accidents seldom take place on the railways.

Soon I arrived at Lyons after changing my train at the big junction of Palais-Royal. The names of the stations are so prominently written on the walls that a passenger can hardly fail to read them. As I came out on the street, the imposing structure of the building of the station of Lyons, that stands beside the underground station, attracted my eyes. It has a big clock on its tower. Now, after taking my cycle from the cycle-office I left for my hotel. It was with great care that I began to pedal on along the principal streets, for the huge traffic is very badly regulated in Paris. The bus and car drivers are extremely reckless.

Towards evening I came out to catch a bus for the Exposition. At the bus-stand I noticed a crowd of people eagerly waiting for a bus. Every one of them had in his hand a slip of paper bearing a serial number and everyone had to wait for his turn to get into the bus. These slips could be had free



Arc de Triomp of Napoleon  
Paris

from the standing box-machine. It undoubtedly helps to preserve discipline, but this good system prevails nowhere else, I think. The motor-buses in Paris do not look well. They have two classes—the front seats are reserved for the 1st class passengers while the rest are for the 2nd class. The front seats are cushioned, but they are not as good as the seats in a Calcutta or a Bombay bus. The 2nd class passengers have only wooden benches to sit on.

Soon the bus reached its destination and I got down to walk a few steps ahead to enter the famous Exposition. And with my first glimpse of the Exposition from outside I felt a thrill of joy. There were hundreds of national flags of different countries flying at high masts and the entire Exposition wore an impressive festive appearance. Truly speaking, I was half impressed even before my entrance into it. Soon I came to the main entrance gate and approached a booking office to buy an entrance ticket costing six francs only. But as I had a special Exposition card which I had bought in Rome for four shillings, I had to pay only half price for the ticket, because the special exposition card which was issued outside France entitled the holder to get 50% reduction in fare on all French railways, in admission fees for the museums, art-galleries, zoological gardens and public halls in France. It also entitled the bearer to get that reduction in

admission fee for the Exposition. On entering I found myself in a spacious yard. It was an imposing gate and on its both sides stood two huge buildings, but then they were not open to the public. From the high yard the entire view of the Exhibition could be had. And it was delightful to view the huge pavilions decorated with their own national flags and festoons, the gigantic Eiffel Tower, about 900 feet in height, the biggest of its kind in the Continent, and a moving sea of heads. Below in front lay a lovely garden with many little fountains always emitting water, and it had, in fact, added to the beauty of the place. It was said to be the biggest Exposition ever held in the world, and forty three nations of different continents had their respective pavilions therein. It spread over a vast area of two hundred and fifty acres on both sides of the Seine in the heart of Paris. From the main gate ran a broad street to the other end of the Exhibition and on both its sides were to be found most of the important pavilions. After my entrance I went to visit several small pavilions. The Siamese temple which was one of them looked very charming. Its grand wooden architecture in golden colour and the pagoda itself with an image of Lord Buddha attracted admiration from many of the visitors. The Japanese pavilion, a two storeyed building, that stood close by, had successfully drawn a large crowd. It exhibited some small machines



and many of Japan's industrial products. But the largest crowd was drawn by the Russian pavilion which stood by the Seine. Curiously enough, it faced the German pavilion. The German pavilion was the biggest and it had on its tower a huge statue of an eagle with wings spread looking angrily at the opposite pavilion. But the most imposing and impressive were the figures of a couple on the tower of the Russian pavilion which was smaller than the German by a few feet only. The male, the worker, had a big hammer in his hand while the female, the peasant, had a scythe, and both raised their hands to proclaim to the world the strength of the peasants and the workers. The majestic statues of Lenin and Stalin dominated in the hall. The statistical reports that were there presented a vivid picture of the woeful lot of the Russian people during the reign of the Czar. They also showed the great progress the country has made in different spheres under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin. The life of the people of old and new-born Russia was vividly pictured in clay-made models of villages and towns that were exhibited in the hall. Then, here were beautiful paintings which went to show how Lenin and that most unfortunate leader of Russia, Trotsky, had led the proletarian revolution to success. Some modern machines too were exhibited to show the progress of the country in that respect. But if there was any pavilion well worth a visit from the

Paris. The church stands on a small hill, not very far from my hotel. From the foot of the hill runs a tramway up to the peak. There is a rope which helps two cars to run simultaneously up and down. There are also brick-steps leading to the peak. This church also has some works of art well worth a visit, but it is in no way better than the church of Notre Dame. The place, however, attracts a large crowd of visitors every morning and evening. It is the highest place in Paris, and therefore a distinct view of the city can be had from the church. From here I went to Etoile, a noted place in Paris, where lies the Arc de Triomp in the centre of the huge junction. There are four gates without any doors for entrance into the Arc. On the walls outside are inscribed lovely figures while on the walls inside is inscribed a detailed information about the dates and places of some ninety-six victories of Napoleon. The names of as many as three hundred and eighty-four Generals, who fought under the command of Napoleon, their chief, were also there on the walls. As I entered the building, I came to notice a crowd of foreign visitors standing around a place in the middle. And on approaching I found them gazing at the little flames of fire which were appearing from below a life-size plate bearing the immortal name of Napoleon. The visitors were placing floral wreaths on it to pay their silent but respectful homage to the revered memory of Napoleon, the Great. Now, the entire glorious past

of France appeared vividly before my eyes and with the deepest reverence I began to remember what little I had read of Napoleon, the greatest of the great and the mightiest of the mighty emperors of France. His was a life of thrills and adventures and achievements that have justly won him universal admiration and an undying fame. A long time had elapsed before I returned to my ordinary mood to work ; then I left for the first floor to glance over the manuscripts and letters of Napoleon which are very carefully preserved in glass cases. But unfortunately my utter ignorance of the language precluded me from doing anything more than casting a simple glance at them. There was a guide here, but he could speak very little English. However, soon I moved on from the hall and walked up the stairs to the roof from where the entire city can be distinctly seen. Paris with its innumerable palatial buildings of all grey tiled slanting roofs and straight roads and squares appears charming when viewed from the roof of the Arc de Triomp of Napoleon.

It was now lunch-time and so I hurried back to the hotel to take lunch in my room. I used to eat my meals in my room, because I would find it difficult to make the garçons understand me and many a time I had to leave the restaurant without having had any meal for the same reason. It is also very expensive to take meals in restaurants in France. And so I used to buy some bread and butter, some sardines and

fruits, and these were what formed my meal. In order to avoid much of the botheration generally caused by ignorance of each other's tongue, I used to pay the shop-keeper a note of value higher than the price of my purchases, and if I had no note, I would take out of my pocket all the coins and ask him to take from among them what was his due.

Towards afternoon I set out again and this time for the Exposition. The whole evening I spent in visiting some of the pavilions not seen on the previous day. Almost every pavilion, I noticed, had in it a claymade model of the country it represented to enable the foreigners to study the life of the people and to enjoy the panorama of the whole country—its towns and villages, forests and rivers, plains and mountains. But even after visiting all the pavilions I was not in a position to make a comparative study of the progress of the countries in different spheres because of absence of statistical charts that alone could help in the matter. However, after going round the pavilions I went to visit a small aquarium which added to the attraction of the Exposition. And then I walked on along the main street casting glances over the fashionable stores and restaurants, cinema-houses and bars—all presenting a gala appearance. From the end of the street I crossed over a bridge to the other part of the Exposition. Here stood the Science Building in which were displayed the latest inventions. This place appeared very calm and quiet, and, in fact,

there was nothing much here to attract a huge crowd. At nightfall when lights of multifarious colours were displayed, the whole Exposition looked charming and queen-like and drew the largest crowd of the day.

The following morning, it was the 23rd August, I got up early to catch a train at St. Lazare for Versailles. It lies in the vicinity, a few miles away from Paris. The trains are always available for the historical town at short intervals. A 3rd class return ticket costs some eight Francs. Versailles is a small town where stands the palace of the past emperors. It is here where was signed the famous treaty known as Versailles Treaty, now almost defunct, by all the great Powers of the world. As I stepped out of the railway station of Versailles, I happened to meet with a couple of Americans who also had come from Paris to visit the palace. Now, we began to walk along the tramway towards the principal street that leads to the palace. It is a lovely street; on its both sides lie rows of big shady trees. Many restaurants are found there to serve the customers in natural environments. The street is very wide and here prevails an atmosphere of calm and quiet. Soon we came to a big field beyond which stands the palace. At the time we reached the main entrance gate, several tourist-cars arrived there from Paris. The palace lies on a vast area surrounded by a high railing. Inside the compound are

to be found beautiful gardens and statues, tanks and fountains. But the outer appearance of the palace is so odd that it scarcely attracts a visitor. The front yard of the palace and the ground floor are anything but impressive. But as I passed across small chambers on the first floor, I was much struck to see them so well ornamented with valuable carpets, lovely paintings and rich architecture. A guide was with us. Soon we came to the emperor's bed-room and then to a private chamber to see the golden chairs. At last we went to the big hall. There was a huge crowd of visitors and hence it was difficult for us to see as we liked. This magnificent hall contains treasures of art which go to point out how the French art of painting flourished when Italy was pre-eminent in the world of sculpture. There are, probably, more than two hundred priceless works of famous French artists which decorate the walls. And these paintings are certainly enough to attract a vast crowd of visitors from far and near and to impress them. In them has been vividly pictured the whole war-history of France. Below each of the painting there is a small note about the war. It is so huge a building that it took me full four hours to cast a simple glance at the magnificent paintings and handsome architecture on the first floor alone. The ground floor of the palace has nothing worth a visit except a small Assembly Hall.

After lunch I went to have a look round the palace of Luxembourg. It stands in the heart of the city. In its compound have been laid out beautiful gardens. The interior of the palace bears testimony to the luxuries of the past emperors of France. It is richly decorated with most valuable carpets, grand architecture and with splendid works of the famous artists of France. From this place I went to see Hotel des Invalides. It lies at Invalides, an important place of Paris. The building has a large compound. It was built by Louis XIV probably in 1670 and thenceforward it had been used for a long time as an asylum, but now one portion of the building houses a war-museum while the other contains the church of St. Louis wherein lies the tomb of Napoleon I right under the dome. The gate of entrance to the building is strongly guarded by armed sentries, but the public have free access into the compound as well as into the building. The museum contains a large collection of war materials including even those used by Napoleon. There are many statues, all of the famous Generals, to be found round the halls. After visiting it I entered the church that lies behind the museum. I added to the large crowd of visitors who had thronged the hall to pay a respectful visit to the tomb. The hall, though small, appears very lovely with marble statues here and there. Around the tomb there is a railing, and from here one has to look downward

to see the tomb, around which there are beautiful figures inscribed on the marble-wall. To have a closer view of the tomb one can approach it by going down to the underground floor, for which three francs are required. Of course, one is also required to pay two francs for entering the hall. In France as elsewhere tickets are necessary for visiting places of interest and importance.

From the compound of the building one could have a distinct view of the fun and frolic in the Exposition that lay close to it. And I was one of those who had come after visiting the tomb of Napoleon to add to the crowd for enjoying the amusements without paying. There was a huge tower fitted with lifts in the amusement park, from the top of which many people were jumping down with parachutes. With great interest and delight I watched the scene. It was, in fact, for the first time that I now saw a parachute of which I had heard so much. Soon I moved on from the place to go to the French pavilion of the Exposition on the President Wilson Street. I had to buy two tickets, one for the pavilion and the other for the Exposition. It was a colossal building housing the art-museum of France. Every room and hall of this huge three storeyed building was decorated with master-pieces of French art. Even a cursory glance over them was enough to convince one of their supremacy in the world of painting. In the



adjoining building were exhibited beautiful clay-made models of France and its towns and villages to acquaint the visitors with the rural and urban life. This building too contained a fair collection of pictures and paintings representing different schools of different times. Now I got very much tired after walking continuously for hours together, and so immediately after visiting the pavilion I entered the Exposition to take some rest in a restaurant. By this time the night had deepened. At about half past nine I left the restaurant. As I was passing over the main bridge on the Seine, I found a large number of visitors occupying vantage-ground on the bridge and also on the banks of the river. It aroused my curiosity and so I asked some passers-by about the matter, but they could not tell me. However, it did not take me long to understand that something would be shown on the river. Almost everyone fixed his eyes on the Seine. I also became very curious to see what it was, and so moved on along a bank of the river to find a place for myself on the wall. Soon every place was occupied. Now the bridge and the banks presented a scene of only human heads. An aged Frenchman sat by me. Fortunately, he knew English. He gave me to learn that it was one of the two evenings of the week when fire and water works were to be displayed. A radio was working to entertain the visitors with music and there were loud speakers to broadcast it distinctly. The huge Eiffel Tower wore an impressive appearance ; it was

brightly illuminated with lights of multifarious colours from top to bottom and it had added to the attraction of the occasion. In the middle of the river there were many bomb-throwers floating in a line. And on either side as well as in the middle were installed hundreds of big fountains. There were huge electric flood-lights below the surface of water around everyone of them. The programme started at ten with a signal. Now the bomb-throwers became active. They were throwing up bombs, all bursting into different colours in the air. The fountains in the middle were emitting water right upward while others were shooting off from both sides towards the middle, and thus innumerable arches of water were formed. And it was a splendid spectacle when they were flood-lit most brilliantly with lights of various colours. Meanwhile several thousand balloons were brought in boats to be let off and they presented a magnificent scene when a search light was focussed on them. There was silence all around ; there was no noise, not even a whisper to be heard anywhere. It seemed as if many of the visitors had seen something unique in their life. In fact, I also was charmed to see the display of the fire and water works. It was for the first time in my life that I saw such a splendid display of fire and water works, and I thanked God for not having missed the opportunity. But I did not know even then that there is a sight still more charming and beautiful to be

seen in India. It is 'Brindavan', a lovely garden in Mysore where is to be enjoyed a much better display of lights and fountains. It attracts innumerable foreign visitors from the farthest corners of the Globe. The garden looks like a fairyland. The construction of the marvellous garden began in 1911 and it was completed in 1931.

After about half an hour the programme came to end. I stood up at once to get out of the Exhibition quickly. But it was not to be. The way was narrow and then there was a tremendous rush of visitors, everyone of whom was eager to go out first. I got such a push from behind that I was lifted up and managed to reach the principal street almost without walking a step. Again I had the same experience near the gate. So huge was the crowd there that it took me about ten minutes to advance a step.

The following morning my programme included a visit to the Musee Guimet at Square Iena, the Conciergeria at Cite and to the War-Museum at Chateau de Vincennes. The Musee Guimet is an Oriental museum. It has a small collection of things of historical importance regarding India, Siam, Indo-China and Afghanistan. The Conciergeria is housed in an old building. It was a prison during the French Revolution. It has several rooms and cells, but none of them has any window to let in fresh air and light. And they are very damp and dark, quite unfit for any human

being to live in. It must have been extremely agonising for the prisoners to pass their days in this hell ! I shuddered to think of the hard lot of the wretched prisoners while going round the rooms and cells. In one of them are exhibited some letters of the prisoners with some pairs of hand-cuffs and a guillotine, all of which tell us a lot about the prison administration of the time. On its walls hang several oil-paintings of a French Notable relating a sad tale of his life. The blood-stained guillotine is there to present the pathetic story of his murder. The rooms and cells are such that even a loud cry of a person does not reach beyond its doors ; it dashes and dashes against the walls until it dies out. The War-Museum is housed in a small building. It is in the fort. The museum exhibits some pictures and war-films which present a vivid picture of chivalry of the French soldiers in the Great War. The films are so fitted in small machines that the visitors can have a look at them by turning a handle round and round. It's very pathetic to see scenes of war. But I must confess that I got inspired by them to die a heroic death for the salvation of my country.

It was near lunch-time when I left the museum for a restaurant close by. And after lunch I went to enjoy for a while the loneliness of the Bois de Vincennes, a big garden full of shady trees, lying not very far away from the fort. This place lies almost in an outskirt of the city. From here I went to Jardin

des Plantes. It is a famous garden in Paris wherein are to be found an aquarium, a summer-house for tropical plants and a Natural History Museum besides a small zoological garden. The museum is the most attractive of all. It contains only the skeletons of animals. Towards evening I left the garden to catch a metro for Bois de Boulogne, the biggest garden in Paris, but let it not be understood from the word 'Garden' that it is simply a garden of flowers. It resembles a forest. It spreads over a vast area at one end of the city, and when one takes stroll in the garden, it seems to him as if he is walking in a forest. It has in it a small zoological garden besides some restaurants. There are tarred roads in and around it, but its stillness is very little disturbed by the motor-cars.

At dusk I reached the garden. A thin darkness had already descended on earth and there prevailed a complete stillness broken at times by chirps of some birds and insects. The weather turned cloudy in the evening, but there was no rain. The garden appeared very lonely, there was hardly a score of visitors. It was in these surroundings that I walked and walked until I became tired and took my seat on a bench in its heart. Now soon I fell absorbed in thoughts; my friends and relations, well-wishers and admirers—all appeared in my mind. At this time a young French couple, probably friends, came and sat by me. They cast a glance at me and then talked a little.

But still I was in the same mood and they remained unheeded. However, before long they turned to their own business; they began to press and kiss each other to their hearts' content, and actually my presence did not in the least embarrass them. Having come across such scenes before everywhere in France I too was not at all surprised or taken aback by their behaviour. It is quite a common sight in France. The French people look upon it with no concern. The social outlook in France is very liberal, and in fact, the whole of the Continent tries to follow to the letter and spirit what the French do. And it can safely be said without any fear of contradiction that the French are the smartest and the most sociable people in all Europe. They are so very sociable that they can befriend quite a stranger within a few minutes of their first acquaintance. It's very pleasing to note that the French people know no colour-prejudice, and it is in them alone that we find a spirit of equality and fraternity.

It was the 25th day of August. Early morning I bade good-bye to this dear city with which I practically fell in love. I could not but sincerely feel sorry to leave the city after a short stay for only five days—a period too short for one to visit a city like Paris, the queen of beauty and a world of enlightenment, whose name and fame attracts people from beyond the distant hills and seas. Still I could ill-afford to spare more than that period here alone. Paris

charmed me as it does almost all who visit it. It was, therefore, very painful for me to bid good-bye to it in order to start for England via Dieppe. The road runs across a vast plain land. There are very few hills on the way. Small towns occur at fairly long distances. On both sides of the road lie fields, some cultivated and some not. In many of them wild grass is allowed to grow in abundance. It is hard to say why the people are not so particular about cultivating them. It was very pleasant to look at the flocks of sheep and goats and cows grazing here and there and at the peasants working in their fields. All these brought before my eyes similar scenes of India and they changed the dull scenery.

At mid-day I reached a small town in the trying heat of a summer day. My tour in Europe falsified my notion that Europe is always cold. In summer the days in France and in certain other countries of Europe are terribly hot while the nights are very cold—so cold that it is difficult to sleep without a quilt or a thing of the sort.

That evening I happened to be in a company of some young French students. By the way, I asked my friends during our conversation about the possibility of an European war. I was much pleased with their reply and was greatly impressed to see their grim determination to fight for the honour and prestige of their country, should such an occasion arise. It is

very hard especially for a casual visitor to understand from the surface of things if any preparation for a war on a large scale is a-foot in France. Even from talks it is difficult to gather if the people worry much about war. It appears to engage the attention chiefly of the professional politicians. But it is a fact that the French public, although they do not desire a war, are ever ready to sacrifice what may be required for safeguarding the independence of their dear motherland.

Next day at about noon I reached Dieppe, a frontier town of France. I went direct to the sea-side to find out a hotel, but even then I did not know that I was yet to learn a lesson there. I approached one by one more than a score of hotels, but I could not get a room anywhere. I was told in every hotel that it had no room, not even a bed to let. So it was really astonishing that

some Englishmen who had come after me  
**Dieppe** got accommodation in the very hotel where

I was denied. It is still hard for me to say definitely if it were my complexion that prevented them from accommodating me. However, utterly disappointed I came at last to the Customs House to catch a boat for Newhaven, but alas! it had meanwhile left the shores of France. Therefore I was compelled to wait for the next boat. Between Dieppe and Newhaven boats ply twice a day—one at 12 A. M. and the other at 12 P. M.,



Towards the evening I set out for a stroll along the beach, one of the loveliest beaches in the Continent. Here stand all big hotels of the city. As I reached the beach, I was attracted by some people who were fishing with hooks from the jetty that stands at a place where the canal has met the Channel. The entire beach was crowded, and it appeared to me as if all the people of the city had come out to enjoy the evening. Many boys and girls were flying kites and some were playing football. Along the beach has sprung up a good number of bathing clubs. As I walked on, I looked with admiration at the ladies who wore no delicacy even when bathing in swimming costumes with men by their side. They all looked very jolly and it seemed to me as if they had nothing in life to worry about. Now it greatly depressed me to think about the lot of our women.

When the night deepened and the people left the beach, I returned to the Customs House. And at about mid-night I boarded the boat to leave the shores of France, but before my departure I got back from the Customs Office my money which I had deposited for my cycle when I entered the country.

# ENGLAND

**I**t was mid-night when I left Dieppe for Newhaven, a distance of only sixty-six miles, by a motor-vessel. The boats that ply between France and England, though small they are, have good arrangements for the accommodation of even third class passengers. I hastened to get on board the vessel and to occupy a bed. The 3rd class cabin contains a very limited number of beds, and so, those passengers who cannot get beds have to stay on the open deck. Adjoining the 3rd class cabin there is a restaurant.

Immediately after boarding the boat I hurried to go to bed. I did not take off anything, not even shoes, when I went to sleep, and it was because I apprehended that they might be stolen. In fact, in Europe one has to be careful particularly about his hats and shoes.

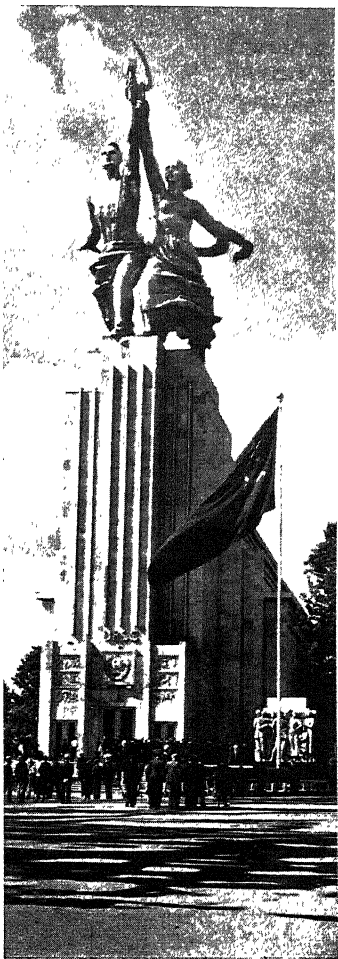
It was four when the boat reached the waters of Newhaven. Now, the passengers became very much impatient to land. Many of them were hurrying up to go to the deck. Their movements and loud conversations awaked me and I went immediately to wash my hands and face, after which I followed others to the deck. At the door of the cabin a boy sat with a plate in his hand, and every passenger put some coppers in it while going to the deck. I

also did not disappoint him. Meanwhile the boat touched the pier. Soon after landing we came to the Customs Office which houses the railway station of Dieppe also. A train was ready to depart for London. It ran direct to the city without stopping anywhere enroute. Most of the passengers took the train shortly after their passports and baggages were examined by the customs authorities. I tarried in the waiting room for dawn to start for London. There is a small exchange Bank in the customs office where I got English money for French.

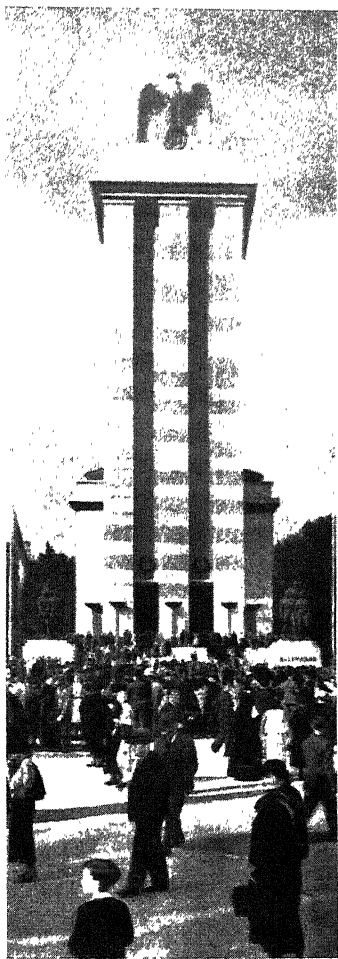
At cock-crow I rode my bike, hoping to reach the city the same day. The road is not bad, it is a tarred one. It runs across plains and hills, villages and towns. Truly speaking, I had a very high impression of the urban and rural life of England, but now I hardly found anything in the villages to be impressed with. The villages presented a picture quite different from that I had so long in view. Here also as in other countries I found village-paths running in a zigzag course—now through fields and now beside houses and ditches. The houses lie scattered, one here and another there, showing no signs of order. But the abodes of the villagers look quite decent; they are all buildings with tiles on. The exterior of the houses of even the poor villagers is hardly a true index of the economic condition of the owners. The villagers, though poor they are, cannot at all be compared even with the so-called middle class people of India. It appears from

their clothes and houses that they are not much poorer than our small zemindars.

Within a few hours of my arrival in this country I discovered a striking contrast between France and England and the impression which I had formed of the people and the country on the very first day of my arrival was exactly the same even when I left the country. The climate here seems to be much more cooler and invigorating than that of France ; while the latter enjoys an ideal weather almost throughout the year, the former always experiences an unsettled weather, the result being that the people seldom find a sunny day to enjoy and hence probably there is a popular saying that England enjoys three sunny days only in a year. It is difficult for the people to say if their sky is green or blue. True to the popular saying, the sun always plays hide and seek from behind the clouds. No one can be definite about the weather of the day, because now it rains and now not. This kind of weather in the British Isles has probably much to say about the character of the Britons who, frankly speaking, seem to me to be the most conservative people in Europe. But in fairness to them I must say that there are many individual Britons who are as good, social and liberal as any people in the world. The Britons look more stalwart than the French, and in many respects they have preserved their characteristics that do not escape the notice of a traveller who happens



Russian Pavilion



German Pavilion

International Exposition, 1937, Paris

to go there from France. England is more mountainous than France, and the pattern of the houses in the British Isles is also different.

At mid-day I stopped at a wayside town to take my lunch. Here also I found myself amidst a curious crowd of boys when I got down before a restaurant. Although I became by this time tired of answering questions of almost the same kind, I replied to them properly and courteously. It is a fact that sometimes I would not like a crowd before me; it is equally true that often I would desire a crowd round me.

Towards afternoon I arrived at the outskirts of London. Now, the sight of the city brought in me immense joy and I got fresh strength and energy to pedal on, and for the time being I forgot the tedium of my journey. In my boyhood the city of London would often captivate my mind and in fact,

many a day I would roam about in my imaginary city of London. I admit frankly that I had always regard for those who had been to a foreign land, especially to England, and, indeed, they also would try to appear before us as different creatures. And when this London, the biggest of cities in the world having a population of more than eight million, came into view, I was simply overwhelmed with joy. But I was soon disillusioned when I entered the city. It appeared to me no better looking than our Bombay. It is simply

a large city, and there is hardly anything of order in it. The streets are not straight and serpentine lanes are many. Then, the buildings do not look decent and they are not of the same size, pattern and colour. There is a colossal building here, but, oddly enough, just by its side stands a small one. Then, on either side of the streets are not to be found rows of trees, and the streets are, in fact, not so neat and clean. Again, the foot-paths are not so broad as to allow the people to move freely. When all these speak not much highly of London, there is one thing which keeps up the fair name of the city and it is the public latrines. They are considered to be the best of public latrines found anywhere. They are scientifically made under ground and they are kept scrupulously clean.

With my step into the city I was greatly impressed to see the smartness and the sense of duty and responsibility in the traffic police. They can safely be regarded as the ideal policemen. Their sweet behaviour and smartness impress everyone.

On the very day of my arrival in the city I was simply astonished when I found a traffic police escorting an old lady across the junction and all this time the vehicles were of course stopped. I was astonished all the more when a policeman at a big junction leaned backward just to listen and instruct me while controlling the traffic. Every traffic police of London has to keep with him a

guide book of the city for properly guiding an enquirer. If the policeman happens to know nothing of the address, he manages to find a colleague to help him in the matter. The heavy traffic is more efficiently controlled in London than in Paris. This naturally led me to compare the system of traffic control in London with that in India. The traffic controllers in Indian cities know very little how to behave courteously with the public, and often they are found to misguide an enquirer. The Indian policemen in general are a disgrace to the British rule.

It was about four when I reached the door of Arya Bhavan at Belsize Square in Hamstead. Here I put up. Arya Bhavan is a boarding and lodging house. The charges for lodging and partial boarding per week vary from thirty-five shillings to forty. It lies in a locality which is considered to be the best of all in London. It is about four miles away from the busy quarters of the city. It looks very calm and quiet. The Primrose Hill and the Hamstead Hill here are the best of places in the city for morning and evening strolls. In them prevails always an atmosphere of calm and quiet.

Immediately after washing my hands and face I went to bed and fell fast asleep. It was about eleven when I woke up, but then it was too late for dinner. I had, therefore, to go without any food, although I was much oppressed with hunger. It



was a double bedded room, well furnished and decent looking. I was happy to have as my room-mate a young student who was one Mr. Lal, hailing from the U. P. He was always cheerful and smiling.

Early next morning I started out of sleep at the sudden call of our cook who came to serve me bed-tea. Happily enough, he was a Bengalee with whom I could beguile much of my spare time. However, at about eight I went to take my breakfast after refreshing myself by a bath in cold and hot water. On the dining table there were several cases containing corn-flakes, cakes and biscuits for us. Besides, I was served some toasts together with a big cup of milk and a pot of tea. After tea, fruits were served. It was certainly a heavy breakfast. Many of my friends living there would not at all care to take their lunch. They would simply drink a small bottle of milk in a dairy and it was enough for them. Milk in London is very cheap, surely cheaper than in our Calcutta. About half a pound of milk in a sealed bottle sells for one penny and a half only. One cannot possibly entertain any doubt about the purity of the milk, because milk is to be had of the dairies only.

In the dining hall I met with an aged Indian Sadhu. He was dressed in yellow clothes. I was not very happy to learn that he came to England by an air-boat just to see and enjoy the West. He had no education, not even the knowledge of alphabets,

but this fellow also, because he was a Sadhu, had received donations enough to accomplish his pleasure-tour, while many of our young men, energetic and ambitious, wither away simply for want of sympathy and support. I was not a little pained to discover from my contact with many of the Indian students living in London and elsewhere that the majority of them are not of such merit as justifies their going to the West for education at a huge cost. They simply waste money by going to foreign countries while in our own country many young men of merit cannot bloom simply because of their poverty.

After breakfast I rode my bike to go to the Indian Students' Association on Gower Street in the heart of the city. Gower Street is a small street. It has come off Hamstead Road. The Association lies very close to the University college on the same street. The building of the college does not look much impressive.

Soon I reached the Association. It is housed in a small building. I went in to enquire of an English lady, a clerk in the office, about the charges for boarding and lodging there. On learning that I am a Bengalee, she called a Bengalee student having the same surname as mine just to introduce me to a fellow-countryman. But I became astonished to see his indifferent attitude when I greeted him with *namasker*. He left me just after a word or two. However, after thanking the lady I entered the common room of the Association and here I found almost

all the nationalist dailies of India. At lunch-time I entered its restaurant for lunch and was very happy to find my favourite dishes here. After meal I went to Great Russel Street to see one Mr. Sinha, another countryman of mine, who, however, extended a very hearty welcome to me at the door of his book-shop. From his house I went to the famous British Museum in the same locality. It is housed in an old building, not at all attractive in appearance. The building contains a huge library, for which alone its name is known beyond the seas. A fair collection of things of archeological importance and a good number of Egyptian mummies draw the notice of the visitors. The library has several million books including some priceless old manuscripts in different languages. Except this library the museum has hardly anything to draw a large crowd of visitors. It is, indeed, not so big a museum as the Calcutta Museum, but it is a fact, if all the museums of the city are taken together, the Calcutta Museum pales into insignificance, nay, even all the museums of India if taken together will not be so big as can be compared with that.

Towards evening I returned to Belsize Square to be present in time for dinner which was usually served at 7 P. M. As I reached five minutes earlier, I whiled away the time by chatting with several students, the boarders of the lodge, in the common room. When the bell was rung, we all entered the dining hall to take our seats round the small tables.

We were promptly served. The food was entirely Indian in character—there were dal ( pulse ) and rice, Indian butter and chupati, curries and chutnee ( Indian condiment ) and such other things. Only vegetarian food could be had here, because most of the boarders were vegetarians. Everyone of us was given a spoon and a fork, but some used them and some did not. Many of my friends engaged in loud conversation and it became a veritable bear-garden. It did not, however, take me long to discover why my friends could not do away with the habit of loudly talking at the dining table. It was probably because they would not care to learn a lesson from the Europeans in this respect. It is a fact, indeed, that many of the Indians in London always live in Indian environments—there are Indian boarding and lodging houses, Indian restaurants and shops, and then they have their own social, cultural and political associations. Wherever one goes in the city, he finds an Indian to talk and mix with, and it seemed to me also as if I were in an Indian city. I know, and it is a fact, that many of the Indian students, although living in the city for a pretty long time, cannot claim to have a single English friend. It is partly because a strong sense of colour-prejudice prevails among the middle class Britons. In this connection I remember an incident, and it is this : one morning some friends of mine went out to rent a room. They approached a house and pressed a button, and immediately out

came a maid who gave them to understand that a room in the house could be rented. Then, after requesting them to wait for a while she went in to call the mistress. But when the mistress came and saw some dark faces, she shrugged her shoulders and said : "Extremely sorry, gentlemen. The room was rented just a minute before." So saying she waited there no longer, and my friends returned sad and disappointed. I still remember another. One evening an Indian asked his maid, an English girl, to accompany him to a shop to bring home the purchases. The proud maid gave him an insolent reply. She told him that she was ever prepared to carry out his order at home, but she could never accompany him outside. Needless to say, her services were dispensed with.

After dinner I set out with Mr. Oswal, an inmate of our house, for a stroll in the Hamstead Hill. Mr. Oswal was a promising youngman studying Law in London. He was one of those who suffered imprisonment during the stormy days of 1932. He was a lovely young chap always smiling. His outlook was broad and his manners were charming. As we reached the hill, we came to notice a meeting. A young man was speaking to a small crowd round him. We did not care to stop there. We went on. By this time a thin darkness settled on the landscape. On both sides of the road we found some benches,<sup>4</sup> but sorry, all of them were occupied mostly by the fair sex. There were big shady trees here. The

birds were chirping and flying from tree to tree. The garden appeared very calm and quiet. We went on and soon came before a pond in which some ladies and gentlemen were fishing with tackles. We enjoyed it very much. It was a pity that they could not catch even a single fish after hours of patient waiting. We came across two more ponds before we reached the summit. There too we found several people fishing with hooks and tackles. From the summit of the hill a distinct view of a good portion of the city can be had. But as it was dark, we could not much enjoy the panorama. We, however, walked and walked for a long while and then lay on the soft grass. After sometime my friend suddenly drew my attention to a couple who were probably too deeply engrossed in sexual enjoyment to be conscious of their surroundings. Then a bobby came up to ask them to leave the place. Bobby is the nick name for a policeman in England.

When the night deepened, we stood up to leave for our lodge. While we came out of the hill, we found the same meeting still going on. This time we increased the crowd. So long a socialist was speaking, criticising the policy and programme of the National Government. Now, a conservative asked the speaker to allow him to speak. He took about ten minutes more to retire, after which the gentleman stood up to criticise the former speaker severely and at last tried to explain what the National Government had

done for the country and the world. I was not so much astonished at their oratory as I was to notice a strong sense of discipline in each and everyone of the crowd. They expressed no sign of intolerance even when their opponent was speaking. They gave a patient hearing to both and then dispersed peacefully to ponder over what they had heard. The British public are fully conscious of their responsibility, and so, seldom are they won over by mere political catch-words and slogans.

Next morning, it was the 29th August, I paid a visit to Regents Park, the second largest park in the country, which covers an area of four hundred and seventy-two acres. It is a lovely garden, noted for the zoo and a large lake wherein boating can be done. Beautiful gardens have been laid out and there are big shady trees here. It is claimed that the zoo has the largest collection of animals in the world, but I doubt very much if it is true, although there is no denying the fact that it has some rare specimens of animals which I did not notice anywhere else. In this country also as elsewhere admission into the places of public interest is regulated by tickets. In this zoo there is an aquarium which has quite a large collection of sea-animals. There are several attractions in the zoo. An elephant-ride delights the visitors most. And then, to have a photo with a chimpanzee who is ever kind to the visitors is not less interesting and delightful. Here I saw for the first time in my

life several penguins, a kind of swimming bird. There is a small tank for them to swim about in. It looks very nice when they ascend the small brick steps of the stand in the pond by short leaps. I also went round the houses and cages housing different specimens of animals. The housing system could not much invoke my interest, because I had had the opportunity of visiting several zoos having better housing arrangements in my own country. In them the authorities have spared no pains to create natural environments round the animals, and it is what is wanting in the London zoo.

At mid-day I left the park to take my lunch in a Bengalee restaurant on Windmill Street, and I was exceedingly happy to taste some of my favourite dishes there. There are several Indian restaurants in the heart of the city and they supply pure Indian dishes. However, after lunch I proceeded to Hyde Park. I had to pedal with much caution along Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street lest I should be knocked down by a bus or a car. Oxford Street is the most important and the longest street in the city. It runs from almost one end of the city to the other and on it stand most of the famous hotels and restaurants, cinema-houses and theatres, Banks, offices and shops. The street has got different names in different parts of the city.

Soon I reached the Marble Arch. It is a fine piece of architectural work. Here once stood



the gallows of Tybrun, the scene of many executions. Here I stopped to enter the Park by the main gate. There are nice tarred roads in and around it. This park, the most important of all, covers an area of 363 acres, but with Kensington gardens which lie close together it covers an area of more than 600 acres and thus earns the distinction of the biggest park. It has many shady trees, but more are to be found in Kensington gardens which are noted for calm and quiet and this is why I liked them. The Park remains always crowded. The Serpentine, a long lake, has lent an additional charm to the Park. Several swimming and boating clubs have sprung up along its banks. It is very interesting to see when the visitors play with their pet dogs by throwing this or that into the water. The dogs like this play so much that they bark aloud if their masters do not allow them an opportunity to swim to bring ashore those playthings.

It was dusk when I returned to my lodge for dinner, and after meal I accompanied my friend, Mr. Oswal, for a walk and this evening we went to the Primrose Hill. While going, chatting and laughing, we came across a young man who was playing on a flute before a house. As we were passing by him, he bowed low and cast a pathetic look. He was a beggar. We helped him and then went on, but now we could no more return to our previous mood. Soon we met another beggar. He was old and

invalid. He had, probably, no other means but that of begging for his bread. He sat on the pavement and drew a picture of a bird and wrote below it: "I also desire to live." He was bowing before each and everyone who was passing by him. We put some coppers in his hat and then moved on again. I became sincerely very sorry to see such poverty of the people in a Land of plenty—a Land which has the biggest empire to rule over. Now I could not help remarking bitterly against the Government of the country which could not solve the problem of the poor. Such governments are certainly not worth existing. I asked my friend: "How is that, many Governments of the West encourage births by rewards while many people do not have even a square meal? Is it not the first and foremost duty of every civilised Government to make each and everyone of the country a useful citizen before they ask for more births?" "I also think so", replied my friend. By this time we reached the hill and sat on a bench on the summit. After a while we were suddenly attracted by a hue and cry, but on the spot we found nothing. It was a fun of some naughty boys. However, we soon returned to our place. From the top of this hill a nice view of the city can be had. After a long time we rose to return to our lodge, and on our way back we came to a cinema-house to see the marvellous picture—"The song of Freedom." We purchased 3rd class tickets, each costing only 6d.

Very cheap, indeed! A girl guide took us to the front of the hall. The seats are all cushioned and the back of every chair is fitted with an ash-tray, so that the carpetted floor may not get dirty.

We entered the hall in the middle of the show and so we stayed on to see the first part of the play. In London the picture is shown continuously without a stop till about mid-night. There is no interval and there is no rule requiring the audience to leave the hall after a complete show of a picture. And so one can stay in as long as he likes.

The story of the play had much to appeal, and it was undoubtedly one of the best productions of the year. It presented a vivid picture of the noble character of a Negro, the hero of the play. While an infant, the Negro, the only son of the king of a Negro-country in Africa, was lost from his home, and at last he was found in America where he was brought up with great care and affection by a lady. He became a famous singer and in fact his was a house-hold name in the country. As the years rolled by, he became more and more inquisitive to know of his family history, and it did not take him long to discover that he was the heir apparent to a throne in Africa. He also found out the country from a medal, presented by his father, which he had preserved with care. Now, he decided to return to his dear motherland, even knowing that his countrymen were still in the primitive stage of civilisation. No

request of his friends and admirers, not even the pathetic appeal of his wife,<sup>2</sup> could shake his discision. So, one morning he and his wife sailed for Africa. But as they reached the shores of their country, an angry mob of half naked people came to spear them to death. They appeared to them as strange creatures. The leaders of the mob asked them by waving hands to go away, but they paid little heed to them. The crowd flocked round them when they landed there. Even then he did not look frightened ; his face, on the other hand, beamed with delight and joy to see his countrymen. He showed the leaders his medal on which was written his lineage and it convinced them that he was their king, but the camp followers could not be convinced. The leaders, therefore, entreated them again to leave the country, but in vain. At last they were taken as prisoners and a day was fixed to execute them. On that day after a fire dance when the savage-people were anxiously waiting for the signal to spear them to death, the grand old-man, their leader, sprang a surprise to them all by proclaiming that he had found all the virtues of their king in him and that he was their king. The speech of the leader calmed down the infuriated mob. Now, they went wild with joy to find their beloved king and queen amidst them, and it turned into a coronation-ceremony of their king and queen.

The following morning some young English students called on me just to pick up an acquaintance with me

and in course of our conversation they asked me first of my itinerary and then of my impressions of the East and the West. I was very frank with them. During our discussion dwelling on the East and the West I said : "The thing that attracts a tourist in the East is the diversity of the people expressed vividly in their social customs and manners and costumes and in their social outlook, but it is practically wanting in the West. The Oriental people in general are a bit more conservative than the Occidental and they are very slow to adapt themselves to the changes of time. The Westerners are very materialistic while the Easterners are very idealistic and hence the difference between the outlooks of the Easterners and the Westerners." Thus I spent the whole morning with them talking on different topics, mainly social and political.

At mid-day I set out to pay a visit to the Imperial War Museum. It is housed in a building on the Lambeth Road on the other side of the Thames. While pedalling along the White Hall Street I came across a small monument erected in memory of those who fell in the war of 1914. The Cenotaph bears the following words : "The Glorious Dead". It stands in the middle of the street in a locality which contains all the important offices of the Government. The Thames is not very far from the place. The river looks much smaller than the Ganges at Calcutta. At short distances there are bridges over the river ; the best of them is the Tower Bridge. It has been

constructed by the Corporation at a cost of one and a half million sterling. It connects the east end of the city with Bermondsey. The bridge, though not so beautiful as the Wellington Bridge of Calcutta, does show the great skill of the engineers. The middle portion of the bridge is two storied. The draw-bridge, the lower bridge, is divided in the middle and they are so constructed that they can be raised upward for the ships to pass through. And it takes only three minutes to raise up and readjust them. The ships indeed can not proceed much up stream. They stop at the London Bridge close to the Tower Bridge.

The War Museum has a large collection of war materials, and it seems to me to be the best of war museums I have seen in different parts of the world. At the entrance one finds a list of countries of the British Empire which helped the Allies during the War with men and materials. And this list says that India alone contributed as many as 1,338,620 soldiers out of the total number of 9,296,691 soldiers of the whole British Empire who had participated in the War. The big halls and rooms of the building are full of military weapons of different kinds including even some war-planes. Some of them were actually used in the Great War. There are several clay made models showing the system of modern warfare. Sincerely speaking, while looking at them, my heart and mind revolted against the scientists who by their inventions of modern military weapons

are helping to destroy the grand civilisation that has been built up after centuries' labour. In a small room I happened to notice some press-cuttings which were carefully preserved in show-cases. They announce the terms of the Versailles Treaty which point out how Germany was disarmed not to be able to rise to power again. They all are exhibited on the ground floor of the building while its first floor is decorated with pictures and paintings of the Great War and of the important personalities of Britain of the time. There is also a big painting of the Versailles Treaty being signed by the representatives of different countries. The turban of the distinguished Indian representative in the picture catches sight of every visitor.

On my way back I came again to the famous Trafalgar Square which is the meeting place of many important streets. It is named so to commemorate the naval victory of Trafalgar. In the centre of the Square stands the Nelson's monument of 185 feet height; at its base four statues of a lion are found. Every evening the Square remains crowded, and it is why many of the political demonstrations are held here. From the Square I proceeded through the Admiralty Arch to see the Buckingham Palace, the residence of His Majesty the King Emperor of the British Empire, but, to speak frankly, I was utterly disappointed at my very first sight of the residence. I think, there is every reason for His Majesty to

envy the lots of the Governors and the Governor General of India in this respect. The building looks very, very old, and it does not, in fact, look better than a house of a middle class Indian zeminder. It has not even a huge surrounding, and so, one won't be surprised if he learns that His Majesty is disturbed in his sleep by the horn of motor-cars running along the public road. Facing the palace stands a lovely marble-statue of Queen Victoria. It is the national memorial to the glorious reign of Her Majesty.

It was about dusk when I reached the Piccadilly Circus. It can well be described as the centre of London's night-life. Here are to be found most of the houses of fashions, theatres, dancing-halls and concert-chambers. At nightfall it presents a picturesque scene when lights of attractive colours are lit in them all.

While going back to my lodge by a shorter route I lost my way. Hence I stopped on the road to see the map I had with me to find out the way leading to my place. Then came a lady from behind and said: "Well, gentleman! may I be of any service to you?" I thanked her for her courtesy and then enquired of her about the road running to my address. Understanding that I might be at pains to follow her directions she offered her services at my disposal, and it goes without saying, she had my heartiest thanks and gratitude for her kindness. She lived somewhere there. After requesting me to



wait there a moment she ran up to her house to bring a cycle for accompanying me. She began to guide me along a zigzag way and after only fifteen minutes we reached Belsize Square. As a token of my appreciation of her courtesy I presented her a copy of my book entitled 'My travels in the East.' She is a German Jew. It was very painful to learn that she was one of the many who fell victims to Herr Hitler's wrath. I was greatly moved when she related in reply to a query of mine how she was forced to leave Germany with a paltry sum of only eighteen shillings and how she had to struggle hard for her maintenance for months and months together in a foreign land. 'It was a very pathetic scene', she said, 'when I kissed my younger brother and sister to say to them good-bye, leaving them to be subjected to more humiliation.' But still she managed to love her fatherland and it was eloquently expressed when in course of our conversation she said : "I feel very glad whenever I find a German and more so when I talk with him. To tell you the truth, I become impatient to talk with the German whom I come across. Truly speaking, I am still proud of my German nationality and the German soil I still hold dear." She continued : "In the past we did our best for the progress and prosperity of our fatherland and in the future too we won't be failing in contributing to the well-being of our nation. We hold no grudge against Germany, although we are at present being inhumanly

British papers. I was shocked to notice, while here, an indifferent attitude of the public towards India. They don't care to know much about India ; they are more particular about sports and pictures.

At the time when I was there the whole city became astir with the news of Mr. Tommy Farr, the boxing champion of Britain, who had gone to the U.S.A. to fight with Mr. Joe Louis, a Negro, the world champion. Mr. Farr was so very popular and the public were so much interested to know about the fight that special editions of the newspapers had to be brought out. Mr. Farr cut a very sorry figure in the fight. He was knocked down within a few minutes. I was sorry not so much to hear the news of his defeat as I was to see the mentality of the editors of the British newspapers—a mentality severely condemnable. Far from according congratulations to Mr. Louis, the champion, they all became one to find fault with him. It was probably his dark complexion that made them so.

Next day at noon, it wast the 31st August, Miss. Therese Heymann, the German lady, called at my lodge to accompany me to the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square. We went to Swiss Cottage Station and purchased two tickets for Trafalgar. For going down to the underground platform there is a kind of staircase which constantly revolves downward, and so one has not to walk down scores of steps. One has simply to stand on a stair and he is automatically taken

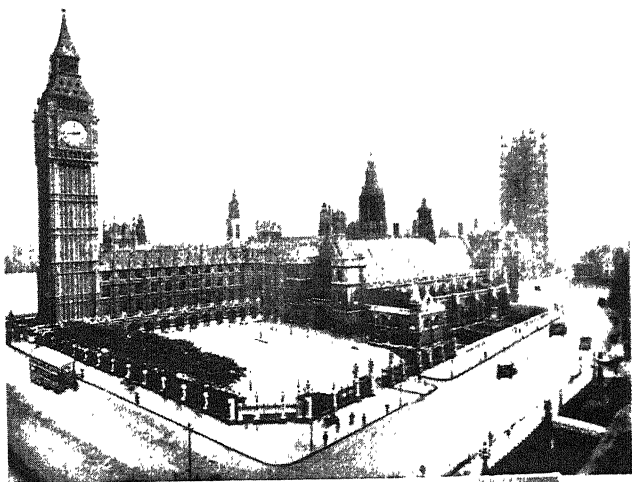
down to the ground floor. Likewise, there is such a revolving stair-case for going up. In London it is dearer to travel by underground railways than by motor-buses, but in Paris we find quite the opposite.

Soon a train rushed in. We entered a 1st class compartment. In these trains there is very little difference between a first class and a third class. The seats in a 3rd class are as nicely cushioned as in a 1st class.

An old building houses the National Gallery. It has a good number of rooms and halls—all decorated with master pieces of paintings of different schools of Europe. My friend was a great lover of art. She explained to me all about the works of the famous English, French, German, Italian and Dutch artists and thus helped me a great deal to understand them. The paintings of the old French school appealed to me most. Next we visited the National Portrait Gallery housed in another portion of the building. It contains nearly two thousand beautiful portraits of kings, statesmen and other celebrities who have played prominent parts in the national history of Britain.

It was a Saturday. This day my programme was to visit the Houses of the Parliament, the Tower of London, the Imperial Institute, the Natural History Museum and the Indian Museum. As the Parliament was enjoying the summer recess, the Houses were therefore open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays only. The huge building of the Parliament stands on a plot of eight

acres just on the bank of the Thames. It is the most impressive building in London, built in the finest Gothic style. There was a rush of visitors when I entered the building. The hall which greeted me first could not at all impress me. It looked quite ordinary and in fact, I found absolutely nothing interesting and attractive in it. Eager as I was to see the Houses of the Parliament whose name of fame is resounded in the remotest corners of the world, I soon moved on with the vast crowd and entered first the House of Lords. Frankly speaking, I was utterly disappointed at my first glimpse of the hall. After entering the House I could not understand if really it were the House of Lords, because it has hardly anything of pomp and grandeur ; it is not even nicely decorated. It resembles the Indian Assembly House in many respects, and the cushioned benches for the members look no better than those in our Assembly House. The only thing here which went to draw my interest is the golden thrones for Their Majesties the King and the Queen. They are placed on the Speaker's dais. Next I visited the House of Commons housed in the same building. Between the two Houses lies an ordinary hall decorated with some paintings. The House of Commons is bigger than the House of Lords, but the former has practically nothing to attract visitors. It looks worse than our Assembly House almost in every respect. The atmosphere prevailing in the Houses is such that any



(Up) Houses of Parliament  
(Down) Westminster Abbey  
London

stranger, however unacquainted he may be with the economic condition of the people, can form an idea of the standard of living of the Britons, and his picture of the country drawn in the Houses probably won't be much different from that if drawn outside. But here in India we find quite a different atmosphere inside the Assembly House from that outside.

The Tower of London is situated in a locality which always presents a busy scene. It stands on the bank of the Thames beside the Tower Bridge. The Tower of London has much to tell about the English history. Here lived many kings and queens and princes. What an irony of fate, many of them were executed here where once they were crowned. At present the Bloody Tower houses the armoury museum. Its rooms and halls are very dark and damp and some of them were used as prison-cells. It witnessed several famous executions. Beside this building lies the Wakefield Tower. In a room of this small building are to be found all the crown-jewels of some of the British kings and queens. They are preserved in a show-case and the visitors can go round it to see them properly. The jewels glitter in the light. Almost all precious jewels of the Royal Family are there. The lovely Royal Sceptre and the crowns of H. M. George VI and Queen Elizabeth and the crown which H. M. George V wore during the coronation-ceremony at Delhi are some of the things that attract the visitors. While looking at them I thought of the British monarchs who have so

generously placed all their jewels at the disposal of the public instead of keeping them under lock and key in their own private chambers. Such liberal mentality is totally absent in our Rajahs and Maharajahs.

After lunch I came to South Kensington to visit the famous museums. It lies to the south of Hyde Park. It is considered to be the best of localities from the educational point of view. Most of the important museums lie here. It is this locality where many of the foreign legations are found. The houses here are not at all congested, and then, its streets and lanes are kept very neat and clean.

The Imperial Institute is housed in an impressive building. It contains a fair collection of products, both natural and geological, of the British Empire and it has statistics regarding population, products etc. of the Empire. Equally impressive is the huge edifice of the Natural History Museum lying close by. It has a large collection of things of all kinds, geological, zoological and botanical, and it can claim to be the biggest museum of its kind in the whole world. The first floor of the building has animals of almost every kind and they have been kept in their natural forms, but the ground floor contains only the fossils of animals and things of the geological world. How delightful it is to see the varieties of people in their natural forms and how interesting it is to make a comparative study of different parts of a man and those of a gibbon

which are kept side by side ! There is a note below each and every thing, so that the visitors may find no difficulty to study them. In the geological world there are precious stones, different kinds of soils and rocks including even gold and silver rocks, and these are the things among others which interest the visitors. So big a museum it is that it requires a visitor months and months to see it properly,

The Indian Museum lies in the same locality beside several other important museums. It is housed in a small building. It has two big halls, one containing only the presents which Their Majesties Queen Victoria, George V and H. R. H. the Prince of Wales had received from India on different occasions. Most of the things are very precious ; they contain jewels. As I passed on, looking over the things on my right and left, my eyes were suddenly caught by a costume of a Rajput girl. It was glittering with jewels. The costume is made of pure golden threads with pieces of diamonds and other precious stones here and there on it. Frankly speaking, my mind now revolted against those people who in the name of loyalty did not feel even hesitant to deprive the nation of her vast wealth. No visitor who happens to visit this hall of the Indian Museum can even imagine that the Indians are really very poor and that many of them do not find even a square meal a day. The other hall contains a small collection of things of historical importance and among them are to be noticed some



beautiful paintings of the pre-Moghul and Moghul period. Here has been preserved with care the famous gate to Sanchi Stup found in Bhopal, a native state of India. The gate is still in a magnificent condition. It has suffered no damage yet. A clay-made model of the Stup is also kept here, so that the visitors can form an idea of the famous Stup. In this hall there are some clothes bearing high artistic works.

It was evening when I came out of the Indian Museum. Without further delay I left for my lodge. Some Englishmen had been awaiting me at my lodge and so immediately after reaching my lodge I was engaged in a friendly conversation with them. Our conversation began to roll round a wheel of subjects, social, economic and political. And during our conversation on politics I gave them to learn when asked that I am one of those who want to see India absolutely independent. I said also how humiliated I felt to introduce myself as a British subject to the foreigners whenever I was asked about my nationality. Frankly speaking, I can't understand how our great leaders, who have been carrying on a relentless fight for freedom, can travel in the foreign countries with British passports. I wonder, how it keeps consistency with their principle. It is unintelligible to me how they can beg of the same devil for a passport whom they like to kill.

Next morning—it was a Sunday—I paid a visit to

the famous St. Paul's Cathedral, said to be the second largest church in the world. It stands in the busiest quarter of the city between Cheapside and Ludgate Hill. It resembles St. Peter's Cathedral of Rome, but its grand architecture, paintings and marble-statues cannot possibly charm those who have once visited the magnificent church in Rome. In its underground floor lies a crypt which contains the remains of many a famous Englishman like Nelson and Wellington. After visiting the church when I came out, I found a small crowd round my cycle. Some of them were examining its different parts, but as I approached, they moved aside and greeted me with smiles.

After lunch I accompanied my friend, Mr. Oswal, to the neighbouring railway station to catch an electric train for Kew. Kew lies a few miles away from London. A 3rd class return-ticket costs ten pence only. The trains run at an interval of every ten minutes. It took us nearly half an hour to reach the Kew-garden station. On coming out of the station we could not know what road to take to reach the garden. And so we ran up to an old lady who was going ahead and enquired of her about the road leading to the garden. She kindly gave us the direction and accordingly we passed over the railway over-bridge and proceeded on right down the street.

Soon we reached the garden. Inside it there is a big pond, in the centre of which we found a big

fountain emitting water right upward. Beside the pond there is a small double storied building, housing the botanical museum. Not very far from it stands another small double storied building, but who can say from its appearance that it is the famous Kew Palace which was once a Royal residence ? At present its rooms are decorated with small paintings. In a room of this building are to be noticed several cushioned chairs which, we were given to learn, were used by their Royal Majesties. They look quite new, although a good long time has elapsed since. This part of the garden looks very beautiful ; lovely gardens have been laid out here and then there are two big hot-houses housing different specimens of tropical plants and trees. Beside them there are beautiful gardens of roses, but for an atmosphere of calm and quiet one has to go into further interior of the garden which looks exactly like a forest. In this garden there is a Chinese Pagoda which bears an excellent wooden architecture and it is one of the things in the garden well worth a visit. Kew Garden is, indeed, not so big and beautiful a garden as its name and fame makes the visitors believe.

Towards evening we left for the city. Instead of going direct to our lodge we went to enjoy the music in Hyde Park. Twice a week orchestra is played in the Park to entertain the visitors. The place is enclosed by a railing, and a chair inside it costs one a penny only.

As we entered the Park, we came to notice several meetings at the corner. The speakers were speaking incessantly and the visitors of the Park were peeping into the meetings for a minute or so before they proceeded further. They were speaking on different subjects—one was speaking on Christianity, another on politics, one on morality and another on sex-problem, so on. Such meetings are held every Saturday and Sunday evening. It is very amusing to see how the meetings are held without previous announcement. The speaker calls a person and when he comes, he begins his lecture to him in the loudest of his voice and ultimately his voice succeeds in attracting some passers-by. It often happens that he does not find a single man to hear him, but still he goes on speaking loudly before the empty place until some passers-by gather round him simply out of curiosity. Indeed, he speaks on a subject. If his talk is interesting, he finds a large crowd round him. Thus meetings are organised every week all over the city by different organisations to enlighten the public on various subjects.

As we had no desire to pay a penny each for a seat within the enclosure, we chose a place for us on the small hill. Just in time the members of the orchestra-party arrived at the stadium and on standing they began to play first their national anthem and with it the vast gathering inside and outside the enclosure stood up. In doing so the people of different faiths

and of different nationalities who constituted the crowd probably felt wounded neither in the national feelings nor in their religious sentiments. I in no part of the world have I seen or heard any leader of a community crying at the time of a political struggle that their religion is at jeopardy. But alas India has the misfortune of having such persons who do not even hesitate to appeal to the lowest passions of their followers in the name of religion for carrying out their selfish political ends.

After enjoying the music for nearly an hour we stood up and soon came out of the Park to enter Lyon's Restaurant opposite Marble Arch. It is a huge establishment. It has branches all over the city. Similar limited companies are found in almost every branch of trade and industry in the country.

As the ground floor of the restaurant was crowded we went down to the underground floor and there we had our tea. The musicians were entertaining the customers. We did not stay in for long. Immediately after tea we got up, keeping a penny each under the cup-plate as is the custom, and paid up the bill to the cashier. In London the fare-charges in both big and small restaurants are almost the same.

On coming out of the restaurant we kept to the left and walked on along the footpath. It was difficult for us to make our way rapidly, because, many people were coming from the opposite direction. So long I had an impression that it was the Indians alone who

made use of a footpath for walking both up and down, but now I saw that the British public too were no better in this respect.

Soon we entered a big amusement-hall. It was crowded. At one corner of the hall the visitors were making target-practice with play-rifles and the targets were nothing but things of daily use. The person got the thing if his shot was right. It cost one only a penny each time. After stopping here for a while we went down to the underground floor where the visitors were enjoying motor-ride in children's cars. They had no engine. Each car had a band connected with the electric net on the ceiling. And so all the cars ran at the same speed. Their movements, though not the speed, could be regulated by the drivers. We also became very inquisitive to enjoy a ride and we did it. When the switch was put off after ten minutes, the cars stood still and a new batch of visitors occupied them. We entered a two seated car. After all the cars were occupied, a boy came to collect six pence from everyone of us, and then he switched on. There were about twenty cars, but the hall was not so big, and hence they were dashing often against one another. It was very much interesting for me to drive, but ere long I suffered a terrible jerk when about a dozen cars fell upon mine from all directions. After ten minutes the switch was put off and we left for the ground floor. While going round the hall, a big signboard on a tent captured our eyes.

The board had the following attractive words on it : "Indian romantic magic and dance. The vivid picture of an Indian village." Naturally, we became curious to see how the Indian life was portrayed. The admission-ticket cost us three pence each. It was a small hall, unfurnished and undecorated. Probably not more than fifty members could be accommodated here. Beside the platform sat some young Bengalee musicians who were playing on a harmonium, a flute, a tabla and several other musical instruments. They could not play well ; probably they were new students of the art. After a while the leader of the party, an aged Bengalee, came and spoke something in broken English about his magic and then began his trickish play with cards followed by plays of some other kinds like 'putting fire in the mouth' and 'discovering a dove within a small box which had none'. The magic-programme came to an end with the disappearance of the magician from within the empty box in which he put himself. This simple Indian magic astonished the European visitors. Then the dance-programme began. Now a young lady, an African Negro, appeared on the platform. She wore an Indian costume. So short was her *sari* that neither her upper body nor her legs beneath the knees were properly covered. Attended by the Indian music she began to dance, in course of which she was making ugly postures by moving her breast, waist and eyes. It irritated me so much that I rose to my feet just after she had finished

her dance and gave the audience to understand that the girl was not an Indian and her dance too was not in any sense Indian. I requested them not to form an impression of the Indian music and dance from what they had seen there. Suffice it to say, the authorities of the establishment became very much angry with me, but I cared a straw for it. Before leaving the place we called on the leader of the party and requested him earnestly not to bring his motherland into contempt by introducing such dances as Indian to the foreign visitors.

Next morning—it was a Monday—I called at India House at Aldwych to see Hon'ble Sir P. K. Noon, the Indian High Commissioner in England. India House has got a very nice building. Its ground floor houses an exhibition of some Indian artistic goods and its first floor contains a public library where almost all the important Indian dailies are kept. Here I got a very cool reception. Our friend of the poor, Hon'ble the High Commissioner, returned my visiting card with a curt refusal to grant me an interview any day, although I had approached him not for help of any kind. I could not discover why I was accorded such a shabby treatment.

In the evening I was happy to attend a private meeting of some Indian students. We had a frank discussion on Indian politics, in course of which many of my friends wanted me to speak of my opinion about socialism, particularly the Indian socialists.



As regards socialism, I remarked after elaborately dealing with it: 'It is probably socialism that can solve the problem of poverty and unemployment and it is this which can bring about an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the world'. And as regards the Indian socialists, I painfully admitted with thousand and one apologies that I had not a very high esteem for many of our comrades who did quite the opposite at home from what they preached outside. It is yet unintelligible to me how a sincere socialist who feels for the poor and who smilingly sacrifices his all for the country at large can feel no scruple to bear the huge cost of education in a foreign country for one of ordinary merit when many of his countrymen, young, energetic and meritorious though they are, cannot carry on their studies simply for want of money. The money which is required for education of only one student in Europe is enough for a number of students to take up the same course of studies at home. Although one should never be judged by his personal character when politics is concerned, it is the character of the leader which bears an influence over the Indian public.

The Indian students in London are to-day more or less nationalist in their outlook, and in fact, many of them take keen interest in Indian politics which often forms a subject of discussion at the dining tables, in parks and streets. Really their outlook has undergone a great change in recent years.

While in the city, it was very difficult for a casual visitor like myself to understand from the general atmosphere of the country if any preparation for a war on a large scale was afoot. I found here and there only some posters inviting the volunteers to be trained what to do in case of an aerial attack ; otherwise, the people were living in an usual atmosphere. They were passing their days as happily as before and they would not care to bother about their future, but it did by no means signify that the British public were unaware of the effect of a war or unafraid of the consequences of a war. It is true, the British public do not become so much panic-stricken in the name of a war as we become.

Nearly half a month swiftly passed away almost unnoticed since I reached London and within so short a time I managed to learn a good many things. I had the valued companionship of many a sweet youngman and everywhere I had found round me an atmosphere of cordiality and hospitality, and therefore it became all the more painful for me to bid good-bye to London and especially to those my friends for whom alone I began to love the city. But still I decided to leave the country for my dear motherland which was a greater attraction to me. As I completed my cycle-tour here, I wanted to return to India overland, but this time by all sorts of conveyances available. Accordingly I purchased a 3rd class ticket for Ankara in Turkey and left the city by the Paris-Express on the

8th September. The evening appeared not very delightful to me. It was not at all happy for me to think of my departure from the city where I now had a number of sincere friends. It was all the more painful for me to think that I might not be able to see them again in my life and that it was probably the last occasion when we were meeting each other.

Accompanied by Mr. Oswal I reached Victoria Station rather late ; we arrived only five minutes before the train's departure, but even then I had something to buy from the stall. So, I ran up to buy the article. Meanwhile my friend carried my heavy suit-case to the train himself, because there was no porter in sight then. Indeed, most of the people, rich and poor alike, carry their things themselves in Europe.

As I entered the platform, I was cheered by my friends who had come to see me off, but what a pity, there was hardly any time for me to talk with them. The train whistled and moved and I ran up to get into it. Now, from the running train I peeped out through the window, but could not have an exchange of smiles with my friends for more than a minute or so. It was 8 P. m.

The train in England seems to be the best of its kind in the Continent almost in every respect. It makes not so much harsh sound when it runs as it does in other countries. Then, the seats even in the 3rd class are as broad and cushioned as the seats in the 1st class are. There is practically no difference between a 1st

class and a 3rd class. It is only the Japanese trains that can be compared with the British. The Japanese trains are superior to the British in certain respects. It is more comfortable to travel by the Japanese railways than by the British, because the passengers in Japan have not to worry much about carrying their luggages, as they are carried by the authorities to their destinations free of charge.

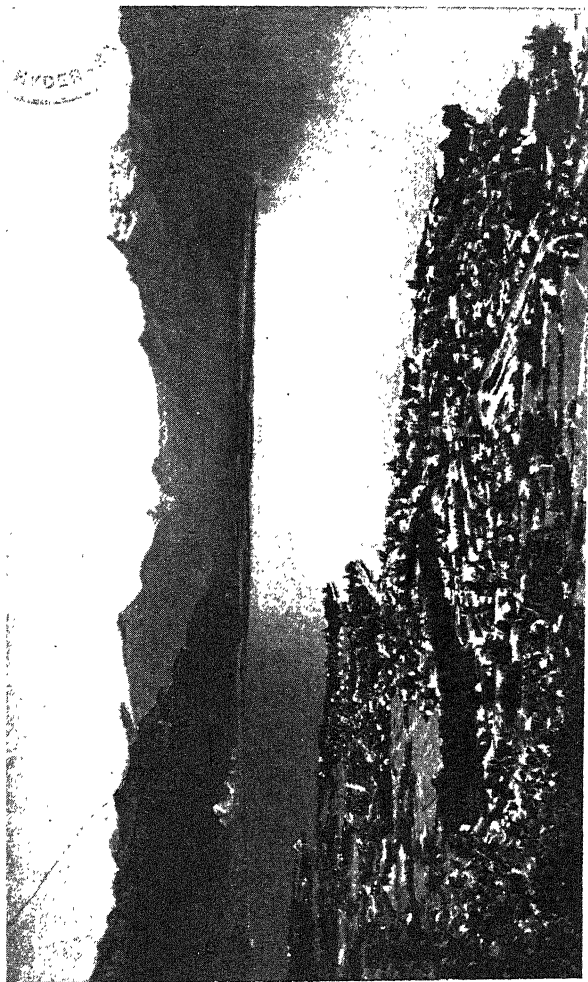
The luggage has to be handed over to the luggage-office at the station and it has to be received back from the luggage-office at the destination and for it one has not to pay even a single farthing. But in England and in the Continent the passengers have much to worry about their bags and baggages, because very few porters come to notice in the stations and therefore the passengers have to carry their baggages themselves even if they are too heavy. If anyone wants to carry his luggage by a porter, it won't cause one a wonder if he fails to catch the corresponding train. And then the Japanese trains are kept more neat and clean. Over and above all, the train-fare in Japan is much cheaper.

At about ten the train arrived at Newhaven and immediately I went on board the ship which was standing alongside the wharf. The boat left the shores of England for Dieppe at 12 A. M.

# SWITZERLAND

**A**fter four hours' run our boat touched the wharf of Dieppe exactly at 4 A. M. The train was ready to depart for Paris. The passengers became very impatient to land as the boat entered the harbour. Everyone of us was anxious to be the first to go through the customs' examination and occupy a seat in the train. There was no porter available at the moment and so I had to carry my heavy suit-case myself like many others of my fellow-passengers. The customs office was housed in the same building with the railway and steamer station alongside the wharf.

One by one the passengers went through the customs' examination and got into the train without the least delay. It started just after the customs' examination was over and ran without a stop anywhere enroute, reaching Paris about two and half hours after. At St. Lazare there was a motor-bus of the Thos, Cook and Sons Ltd. ready to depart for Lyons Station with only those passengers travelling with Cook tickets. At about ten I took my train for Lausanne. I occupied a seat in a through-carriage. In my compartment I happened to pick up a conversation with a young English girl who also was going to Switzerland, though not to Lausanne; she was going to Bern to enjoy a week of her holidays there.



Geneva Lake, Switzerland

She had as much knowledge of French as I had. Unable to discover the through-carriage for Bern she took her seat in my compartment. She could not even ask anyone of the railway staff due to her utter ignorance of French. She was feeling helpless. She came to me, shrugged her shoulders and remarked : "English is of no use here, I see." Then she asked for my help, but pitiable was that my condition too in this respect was in no way better than hers. Nevertheless, I approached a railway officer and managed to make him understand me with great difficulty. He understood me perfectly well. He was very courteous. He took me with him and showed me the carriage destined for Bern. There was no signboard on it. When the train reached Dijon, I showed her the compartment. Here different through-carriages were to be attached to different trains. But even in so big a station we found no porter. However, I helped the girl to carry her heavy suit-case from my carriage to hers.

It passed lunch-time, but I had no meal yet, because the train stopped nowhere, not even at the big junctions, for more than five minutes. At last I took some sandwiches and fruits, but they too were available only in certain big stations. While on train journey I had to feel a lot of troubles to quench my thirst, as I could seldom get drinking water in the stations. In this respect India appears to be better, for, food-stuff and water—both are amply available in

all stations in our country. But I think, the European travellers in India have a similar grievance and it is for beer, their ordinary drink, which cannot be procured even at fairly big stations.

After about five hours' run from Paris the train arrived at Vallorbe-Gare, the frontier station of France. Here the steam-engine of the train was replaced by an electric engine. In Switzerland there are only electric trains and it is why no steam train comes to notice there.

Almost from the Swiss border our train began to ascend small hills and I was eager for a lovely natural scenery to sight. Switzerland is described as the queen of beauty and it attracts visitors from the farthest corners of the Globe, but it was really a pity that I could not be impressed with any scenery I came across on the way to Lausanne.

The train reached Lausanne at six.

**Lausanne** After keeping my suit-case in the cloak-room of the station I left for the city. My first impression of the city was anything but good. I found not a single impressive building. And then, the streets and lanes looked not so neat and clean and many of them were not even asphalted. The tram-cars which came to my sight looked even worse than our old tram-cars in Calcutta. In fact, modern tram-cars in Calcutta are the best of cars in every respect in the world.

I put up here in Hotel Pension National. I



was charged only five Swiss Francs per day [about twenty-two Francs = £1 (Sterling) = Rs. 13-5-4] for a well-furnished room. It was a middle class hotel.

After some rest in my room I came out to enjoy the lake-view. Lausanne stands on mountains on the Geneva Lake. While in the city, I could hardly feel that I was in a principal city of the same Switzerland of whose natural beauty I had read so much in books, monthlies and pamphlets. The same day of my arrival I happened to come across several young Swiss. They all expressed surprise to hear that I was not much impressed with their lovely city.

Soon I came to the lake-side. The place is flat. Here gardens have been laid out and most of the big hotels stand at this place. There is a Ferry-station here from where every morning a steamer pays a trip to Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, lying some sixty-six kilometres from Lausanne. A return trip costs one only eight Francs (Swiss). The train-fare also is the same.

While walking along the shore of the lake, my attention was suddenly drawn by a companion of mine to a lady in an Indian costume. She was taking a stroll. She was, I came to learn, a *Maharani* of a big native state of India. I was very happy to see an Indian here and I approached her, but I painfully discovered from her talks that she was not so earnest to talk with me. Needless to add, I left her then and there. I felt an intense desire to talk with her, not

because she was a *Maharani*, but because she was an Indian, one of my dear motherland, living in a country far away from ours.

Next morning I came down from my hotel to the lake-side and ate my breakfast in a restaurant situated at a lovely site beside the Ferry-station. From this place when one looks round, he is caught by a charming scenery. A dark line of a range of high mountains that guard the coasts of the lake comes to sight together with innumerable towns and villages that have grown up all around. It is a lovely sight, no doubt, but I was not so impressed. The same day after returning from Geneva I wrote a letter to a German friend of mine in London relating my trip to that famous city and my impressions of Switzerland, and in reply I learnt that he was very sorry to read my letter. In his letter he wrote : "..... I don't know what sort of a taste you have got. How is it, my friend, when the tourists and visitors—all speak so highly about Switzerland and describe it as the queen of beauty, you say you are not impressed with it ?" To this I replied : ".....Well, friend, I hope you will excuse me if I say that you have wholly misunderstood me. I never said that Switzerland is not beautiful. I fully agree with all others that it is the most beautiful country in all Europe, though not in the world. I know, nowhere else are to be found so many lakes within so small a place. Then, it is situated at a nice position surrounded by all important countries. They are

only a few hours' run from Switzerland. Its communication system is highly commendable. There is no steam train ; only electric trains run all throughout the country. For all these I like the country, but I must admit that I am not much impressed with it—its beautiful scenery of lakes and mountains, towns and villages, because I happened to come across more beautiful scenery elsewhere. If you go out, my friend, with an unprejudiced mind, you will find much better natural scenery when you will travel in the Himalayas—I mean particularly Kashmere and Darjeeling,—along the Malabar coast of India and in Bali, Japan and Italy. Mount Fuzi of Japan will surely impress you, Lake Maggiore of Italy will, I doubt not, charm you. Lovely Bali and the Malabar coast and particularly the Himalayas which surpass all others in beauty will make you completely forget the world, and you won't like to leave the place, once you are there. Now you will agree with me, I hope, that one who has happened to see a more beautiful thing cannot possibly be impressed with a less beautiful one."

Next morning, the 11th September, I left the city for Belgrade at ten by the Express. In the station I saw no porter to carry my suit-case, and so I found it very difficult to carry it to the opposite platform. Nevertheless I tried. The suit-case was so heavy that I could not carry it at a stretch. I was carrying it five steps or six and then put it down to take relief, and thus while I was carrying it down the underground

# YUGOSLAVIA

**A**T the frontier of Switzerland some Italian customs officers got into the train to examine our passports and baggages. It took us only a couple of hours to reach the frontier from Lausanne. The train did not stop here for long. There is a long tunnel called Simplon Tunnel which demarcates the respective boundaries of the two countries. And through this tunnel the railway runs.

At noon our train was running along the coast of Lake Maggiore. I was so much charmed with the marvellous scenery of the lake that I could not turn my eyes to anything else. Around the lake have sprung up innumerable lovely towns and villages at the feet of the mountains, and in the lake itself there are many beautiful rocky islands containing fashionable houses of the rich people. It forms the loveliest scenery in the evening when the golden rays of the setting sun play on the high mountains and the electric lights of different colours are lit in the towns and villages in and around the lake.

Towards evening the train reached Milan. It was the terminus of the train and hence my compartment destined for Venice was attached to the corresponding train. Here I bought some sandwiches and fruits and these were all what formed my meal. As

there was ample time yet for the train's departure, I got a bicycle from one clerk of the station-staff for a short visit to the city. Milan is a big city and it was, therefore, not possible for me to go round it properly within so short a time. However, I got about half an hour at my disposal to move in the city, but frankly speaking, I was not much impressed even with what little I had seen.

It was just with the whistle of the train that I reached the platform and within an wink of an eye I got into the train. I was tired and weak and my heart was palpitating rapidly. I could no longer stand. When I was in so much need of rest, I found my seat occupied by a young chap, a military student. Now I lost my temper. Every seat in the

**Milan** compartment was occupied and other compartments too were crowded and so there was the remotest possibility of having a seat for me. Although angry, I asked the chap like a perfect gentleman if he had removed my hat from the seat. He replied plainly in the affirmative and I could not stand it. I muttered for a while and then uttered : "Fool you are." He understood its meaning perfectly well, but, fortunately, he did not fly to rage. He smiled and asked : 'I am a fool, is it ?' By now I came to proper senses and understood that such words as I had said should not emanate from the mouth of a man of some culture. Besides, where would it lead to, had he lost his temper ? I

was really sorry for my conduct. And so I said in reply ; "Excuse me, friend. I have never called you a fool. I meant to say that it is not good for a wise man to occupy one's seat by removing his things." He was really not what I had thought of him. He was a perfect gentleman. He stood up to make room for me, but I asked him to be in his seat and not to worry about me. He would not listen to me ; he drew me by hand and we both sat, although with some difficulty, on my seat. He could speak some stray English words. Other passengers were also Italian, ignorant of English. I stayed among them like a dumb fellow. When the train neared Venice, my fellow-passengers asked me by gestures if I would be halting at Venice. When I said, 'no', they requested me to break my journey, and by gestures they wanted to impress upon me that Venice was the most beautiful city in all Italy and that it was a city floating in the water. I now felt tempted to see it and accordingly I broke my journey at Venice. It was mid-night when the train entered the Venice station.

In the station I met many hotel-guides ; they stood at the exit. I enquired of them all about the possibility of having a single-seated room, but I was disappointed at their replies. I fell in a serious trouble now at this late hour of the night for my accommodation. I was thinking how and where to pass the night when a hotel-guide approached me. He took me to a person and asked me to put up in his house. I agreed

and the guide left me with my heartiest thanks and gratitude. The house of the fellow was about a mile off the station. Although much fatigued, I had to walk the distance, because there is no conveyance available in the streets in Venice. At about one I reached his house. I got a furnished room for which I had to pay only ten lires per day. There are many poor families in Venice which welcome paying guests. One or two rooms in their houses are kept separate for the purpose. They are exactly like a hotel.

The old lady of the house was very kind to me. When she learnt that I had had no meal yet, she went to cook for me at that late hour of the night. It was about two when I went to bed after meal.

Early next morning I left for a look over the city. I had no worries to feel for my bag, because I kept it in the cloak room of the station. The charge per bag for twenty-four hours was only two lires.

As I walked on along the footpaths glancing over the buildings on my right and left, I became charmed more and more. It is a unique city in every sense and it is probably the only one of its kind in the whole world.

## **Venice**

Venice seems to be floating in the water. In place of its streets and lanes it has got only canals, small and big. Therefore, motor-cars or taxis or any other conveyances of the sort do not come to notice in this city. In their places there are motor-launches and boats which help in the transport of goods and passengers from

place to place. But for the wayfarers there are foot-paths on both the banks of the canals, and bridges over them occur at short distances. The canals are very deep. Both their banks are well-built with stones, so that they may suffer no damage. The buildings of the city are not modern, they are old and unimpressive, but the plan of the city is such that it impresses one and all. While going round the city I could not help feeling that Venice and Venice alone in Italy is sufficient to attract visitors in large numbers from the farthest corners of the Globe. Then I understood what I would have missed, had I not broken my journey at Venice, the loveliest of cities in Italy.

At about eleven in the same morning I left for Belgrade. I got a seat in a through-carriage and it saved me from a lot of troubles. Towards afternoon I reached Trieste, a beautiful city of Italy, famous as a port. It was the terminus of the train, and so the through-carriage was attached to a corresponding train bound for the capital of Yugoslavia.

As the train was to depart nearly two hours after, I took a taxi-cab to go to meet an Italian friend of mine with whom I picked up acquaintance while going to Greece from Beirut. Happily enough, I found him in his house. We then went together by the same car round some important places of the city, reaching the station just in time.

Trieste is not a very big city, but it lies at a charming spot on the Adriatic coast. The beautiful mountains



and the sea lend charm to the city. Its streets are very neat and clean. On both sides of them stand huge buildings, all modern. Beautiful gardens and squares and the roads along the sea-coast are some of the attractions of the city.

The whole night I could not have even a wink of sleep, because the room was packed to its capacity.

The train was running over a mountainous region. At Postunia, the  
**Trieste** Italo-Yugoslavian frontier, our passports and baggages were examined. The train was not detained there for long. It reached Zagreb, an important town of Yugoslavia near the frontier, in the early hours of the night. Here I bought some sandwiches and fruits from the vendors for my dinner. I got some Yugoslavian money while in the Italian territory and so I had no difficulty to buy things now in this new country.

Zagreb is not a very large town. It stands on mountains. It looks very beautiful, especially in the evening, when electric lights up  
**Zagreb** and down the mountains are lit.

It being the biggest town near the frontier has attained some importance, but its railway station is not a very big one. It fails to speak much highly of the town. As the Express reaches the town at about ten P. M., many of the passengers who do not like to travel the whole night break their journey here.

As many new passengers boarded the train from Zagreb, I left my faintest hope of securing a place

for sleep. Then, there was another trouble and it came from the ticket examiners who disturbed us whenever we fell a-dozing. Beside me sat a young Slav, a native of the country. He was feeling much sleepy. So I made a pact with him to sleep comfortably. Accordingly he put his head on my lap and I on his back and thus we managed to pass the night.

Early in the morning we reached Belgrade. Here also I kept my bag in the cloak-room and so I had nothing to worry about it. On coming out of the station I entered a big cafe, and after a heavy breakfast I went to look for a hotel. One by one I approached several big hotels of the city, but nowhere could I get a room. They all were crowded.

### **Belgrade**

From one of them I got an address of a family. A room was available there, but it was unfurnished and unclean, and then its rent was too much. After a long search I managed to get a room in a hotel. I was charged fifty Dinars for the room per day (£1=about 200 Dinars). Though a big hotel, its rooms and floors were so unclean that I could hardly expect it in an European country. The latrines of the hotel were made so nasty that every time I had to return from their doors. The Yugoslavs as a people are very dirty in their habits, though they look some smart and clean in their appearance. It can be gathered from a peep into their houses, ordinary restaurants, cafes and hotels. These people seem to be poles apart from other Continental people almost in

every respect. They have a greater affinity in matters social and economic with the Oriental people than with the Occidental. I mean by Occident the countries beyond the western border of Yugoslavia, because the contrast between Yugoslavia and those countries is so striking that it at once catches sight of the visitors when they enter the country from Italy. The colourful costumes of the village Serbs greet the eyes of the visitors and they change the monotony of the scene from which the travellers suffer in all western Europe. Their food and clothes, customs and manners are at much variance with those of the people of the Occident. Even their scripts differ from the Roman. It is as unprogressive a State as any of the Orient. Their standard of living too is much lower than that of any people of the Occident.

As I was feeling much fatigued and sleepy, I went to bed immediately after changing my clothes. I had a very sound sleep till I was awaked by a maid for my lunch.

Towards afternoon I went to visit the International Exhibition in which more than a dozen nations were represented by their respective pavilions showing their progress in different spheres. It was held on a lovely site facing the river. The flags and festoons on the different pavilions attracted notice of the people from a good distance. It lay over a large area in a field opposite the city. Visitors came in hundreds and thousands from almost every country of Europe,

and it is why all the hotels and the boarding and lodging houses of the city were crowded. From Italy a special motor-train was running to Belgrade for the Exhibition. There was another special train running from Hungary. It also was a motor-train. The Exhibition, though a big one and drawing a large crowd, was no charm to me and probably to them also who had seen the International Exposition in Paris.

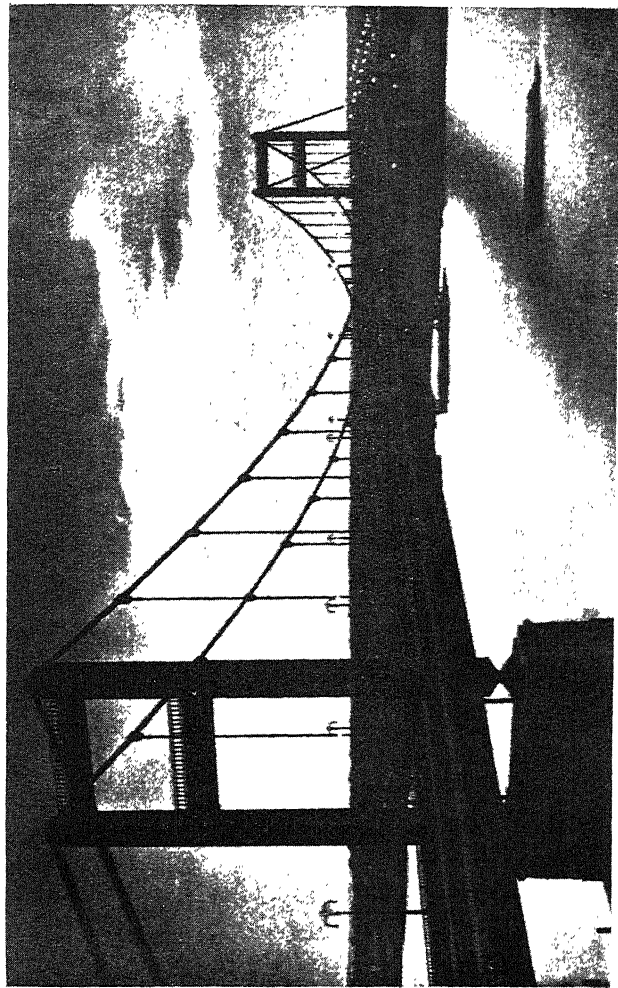
In the evening I left the Exhibition for Kalemegdan Park, the best of parks, lying on a hill at the confluence of the Sava and the Dunav. Frankly speaking, I was not much impressed to see this their best of parks. But I must admit, it offers a lovely view at sun-set. It contains a small zoo.

Belgrade is the capital of Yugoslavia, a country of only fourteen million people. Though the biggest city of the country, its population is only 250,000. It stands on hills where the Sava and the Dunav have met. They are small rivers. The breadth of the Sava is only 800 metres while that of the Dunav is 1000 metres. They have not even a strong current as many of our Indian rivers have. The city looks not so neat and clean. Some of its streets are asphalted, but not all.

Next morning I left the city for Bulgaria. I was misinformed about the time of the train's departure and it is why I came to the station to catch the train nearly three hours earlier. In the station I happened to be acquainted with Dr. Joseph Stolf, the secretary

of the Putnik Society of Tourism. Putnik is the Government travelling agency. It conducts tours in Yugoslavia and it also arranges accommodation of tourists and visitors in hotels and families. It hurt him to learn that I had so much troubles to feel for my accommodation in Belgrade. He became all the more sorry when I told him about the rent of my room. On hearing me he regretted and remarked: "You have been simply robbed of by the hotel people. They have taken the advantage of your ignorance of our language. The room which you got for fifty Dinars is worth only twenty-five or thirty Dinars." He went on: "You would not have to feel any trouble at all for your accommodation, had you come to us first. We have got at our disposal as many as two thousand hotels and families. They are under our own control and so the visitors have no chance to be cheated in any way. We have got all kinds of rooms. The rent of the rooms vary between twenty Dinars and one hundred." We talked for about an hour in his office in the station. He seemed to be very sociable. We became so very friendly to each other within so short a time that he requested me earnestly to write to him off and on from India.

In the waiting room of the station I met a native girl. She was very young. She sat on a bench opposite mine. She had her younger sister by her. A sweet smile played on her lips as I turned my eyes to her. I was much inquisitive to pick up acquaintance



A lovely view of the bridge and the river in a moon-lit night  
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

with this girl. And so I asked her if she were a native of the country. She could not follow me. So, I asked her again and this time by gestures. Now she understood me and nodded in reply. Then she asked me something in her tongue, but not a syllable of it was intelligible to me. So, unable to make me understand what she meant to say she approached a world-map on the wall and drew my attention to India in it and wanted to know if I belonged to that country. Thus, we exchanged our ideas for a good long time. The thing which impressed me most was her smartness and lovely manners. Although very young, she was not suffering from any delicacy to talk with an aged man especially a foreigner like myself. There was not a taint of delicacy I noticed in her. Her manners and frankness charmed me so much that I lost no time to bestow upon her all my brotherly affections. In course of our talk she impressed upon me by gestures that she would be travelling by the same train with me upto Nish. Nish is a big railway junction on the Belgrade-Sofia railway. It lies near the frontier.

When the train came in, we boarded it. I got into a 3rd class compartment while she entered a 1st class. Although we were not in the same compartment, we saw each other at every station where the train stopped. Whenever I looked at her compartment through the window, I saw her looking at mine and thus we had exchange of looks and smiles. I enjoyed it very much. When I was talking with a fellow-

passenger in my compartment, she came and kept waiting for me on the through-passage. At once I went to her. I did not know that the train had meanwhile reached Nish. She came to say good-bye. We had no talk because of our ignorance of each other's tongue. We shook hands and parted silently with an exchange of smiles. She kept looking at me from the station until I went out of her sight.

The same evening while I was enjoying the panorama of the mountaineous region through which the train was running fast towards Bulgaria, several ladies came from different compartments and stood by me on the through-passage. They seemed to be very inquisitive about me and it was expressed in their looks and manners. I could not help smiling within myself to notice an aged lady pushing a young girl from her back to ask me something. I did not pay much attention to it; I kept gazing at the fields and hills. After some time the young girl approached me and I greeted her with a smile. She asked me: "Excuse me, please. Are you an Indian?" Then followed several other queries. Thus she picked up acquaintance with me. In course of our talk I was happy to learn that she was a student of the American College of Sofia. Now I heaved a sigh of relief to find an English-knowing person to talk with. But it was probably unbearable for her mother to see her with me for long. And so she was soon taken away to her compartment. Learning that I was the author of an English book the girl requested me to



oblige her with a copy of my book to read, and with pleasure I did it, but it pained me to learn that her mother asked her to return my book immediately. How conservative the lady was !

I happened to make acquaintance with another Bulgarian girl in the similar manner. She was returning with her mother by the same train to their country from the International Exposition in Paris. Her mother was ignorant of English, but she could speak it fluently. Her mother, I was told, felt pity to see me standing alone and unfriended. So she asked her to make acquaintance with me. I was introduced by the girl to her mother who opened a nice conversation with me. I was interpreted by her daughter. She was Miss. Pepa Dr. Uzunova, a student of the American College of Sofia. I was also given to understand that she was the authoress of a book of poems. Although young, she looked very smart and intelligent. We became so friendly that at the close of our talk they invited me to their house at Stara-Zagora, a small town in Bulgaria. I could not refuse their invitation, although the place was out of my way and it involved me in an additional expense.

# BULGARIA

Soon the train reached Tsaribroad, the frontier town of Yugoslavia. After a short stoppage here our train moved on and entered Bulgaria through Dragoman. Dragoman is a very small town lying on the Bulgarian side of the frontier. Sofia, the capital of the country, is not very far from Dragoman.

While at the Yugoslavian frontier, I was happy to meet an aged American. He was going to Yugoslavia, but was refused entrance by the passport authorities at the frontier and hence he was sent back by our train. He was refused admission for no fault of his. During our conversation he related the facts that had brought him so much trouble and I was very sorry to hear his tale of woes. He said : "You see, I approached the Yugoslavian consul at Sofia for a visa. He gave me to understand that I being a domiciled Bulgarian required no visa for his country. I sincerely believed him. Whom to believe, my friend, if not him, a man of such a position, who is supposed to know best about it ? But now see, what troubles I have got. As soon as I reached the frontier, the passport officer came and examined my passport, and when he saw that I have no visa, he refused me permission to enter the country. Now, so much trouble and so much loss

of money simply for the ignorance of the consul." I understood his position quite well, because I also had a similar bitter experience and it also was due to the ignorance of a consul. I now related to him that my experience—what the Dutch consul in Manila told me and what troubles I had while landing at Sourabaya in Java for having no visa. I told him also how I got a temporary permit from the authorities to stay in the Dutch East Indies and later on how I was expelled from the East Indies for no fault of mine. Really ours were one or two of a thousand such cases which occur almost daily. How one suffers for another's ignorance !

At mid-night we reached Sofia. While in the train, I was thinking seriously how to find out a hotel in the city at such a late hour of the night. The American gentleman, who sat by me, read on my face that I was worrying about something. When asked, I told him, and he was kind enough to offer me his help

in the matter. I was very hungry too,

**Sofia** because in no station enroute to Sofia

I found good eatables to purchase.

Due to a long journey I became both tired and hungry, and so I was badly in need of rest and food. As regards the former I was not sure, but about the latter I lost all hopes of finding any restaurant open then. I got some relief in my worries only when my new acquaintance, the American gentleman, offered his service at my disposal.

The railway station is not so big. When we—my

self and the American gentleman—came out, we found no car, not even a hackney carriage, at the stand. The tram-cars also stopped running. After walking a little distance we came before some restaurants and hotels, but they all were closed. There was no light in them. No life seemed to be throbbing in the city. To say in a word, it presented an appearance of a dead and absolutely dead city.

On stepping out of the station I formed not a very good idea about the city as a whole. I found the road unclean and unpaved. It was strewn with stones. As I walked on along the principal road, I asked my friend: "Is it the best road of the city?" "Yes. Why, are you not impressed with it?" replied he. This road also was strewn with stones; it was not asphalted. It leads to the city lying more than a mile off the station. It is Maria Louisa Avenue. It runs over the Bridge of Lions from where the city proper begins. The bridge is so named, because there are two big statues of a lion on both sides of the bridge. It lies over a dry stream, by the side of which stood the wall of the town. A few steps away from the bridge stands a building containing a modern bath-house. There is an electro-therapeutic department in the bath-house. The temperature of the water is about 47°C. Patients suffering especially from skin-diseases, hereditary syphilis,

chronic rheumatism etc. are advised by the doctors to take bath in this water.

While walking along Maria Louisa Avenue, we found a small restaurant being closed. We entered it. Vegetable curries and meat-preparations—all were out of stock. We got only *payash* to take. Payash is a preparation of milk, sugar and rice, very delicious to taste. It is very much liked by all near eastern people. The Bulgarians also like it much; they have learnt to take it probably from the Turks.

It was past one when we reached a big hotel in the heart of the city, but charges there were too much. We, however, got another hotel on the same street. It also was a big hotel, but charges here were moderate. It was Sofia Palace. I got a well-furnished room on its 2nd floor for fifty levas only (Outside Bulgaria £1= about 500 levas). After arranging my accommodation in this hotel my friend wished me good-night. But for his great kindness, quite possibly I would have to pass the night on the bare floor of the station without any food and sleep. Every American whom I had met so far was very kind and affectionate to me. I have seldom come across any other people so kind and courteous towards the Indians. The Americans as a people are very, very liberal in their social outlook and they are very sociable too.

Next morning I was very glad to be introduced to a Hungarian gentleman. He was no less a man than the personal secretary to the Foreign

Minister of his country. He could speak English and it helped us a great deal to enjoy our mutual companionship. We had had a long talk, firstly about his country and then about mine. I learnt from his talk that he was well-acquainted with some of our eminent Indians like Sir Jafarullah Khan whom he happened to meet in Budapest. After he had left me to receive a telephone-call from his country, I went out to have a bird's-eyeview of the city. In fact, there was absolutely nothing in the city which could appeal to me—not even its archeological and ethnographical museums, its Town Garden or the Royal Palace. The museums contained hardly anything to impress a traveller who had happened to visit most of the big museums of the world. They had not even large collections of things. Town Garden, said to be the best in the city, could not attract me at all, because it is a garden which appeared to me to be not much better than an ordinary Calcutta park. The Royal Palace too was anything but impressive. And as regards the city as a whole, it is better not to say anything. Sincerely speaking, I was greatly disappointed to see the city. I could hardly imagine before my visit to Europe that the capital city of a European country could be so unclean as Sofia. No doubt, its streets are straight, but they are unclean and not asphalted. Stones on the streets are not even pressed down. The buildings are small, mostly of old style. And then, there are not many parks in the city.

At mid-day I entered a small restaurant. The mode of preparing food in Bulgaria is almost the same as that in the Near East and India. Spices are used in curries, and green chillies are much taken by the Bulgarians. In this country fruits, especially grapes, are very cheap, so cheap that one pound of grapes sells for only eight levas or so. It is exported in large quantity to other countries of Europe. I used to take here plenty of grapes, and at last I became rather fed up with it. Indeed, in quality the Bulgarian grapes are much inferior to those of Arabia. Bulgaria is known rather as a land of grapes and roses, both of which grow there in abundance. The Bulgarian rose-scents are famous. They find their market even in the remotest parts of the world. But the Bulgarian rose cannot possibly be compared in any respect with the Indian rose, because it is small and not so fragrant as ours is.

While I was eating my lunch, two gentlemen, one a missionary, came and took their seats by me. They were chatting and eating and often casting glances at me. After some time they asked me first of my nationality and then of things concerning myself. Thus they picked up acquaintance with me. In course of our talk I took them by surprise when I told that beer was a thing absolutely foreign to me. At this they burst into laughter, and one of them asked me : "Then what you drink if not beer ?" "Water and simple water, sometimes milk." Now they burst into greater laughter and it drew the attention

of all the customers present in the restaurant. They seemed to be very inquisitive to know about the matter that made them laugh so heartily. They also laughed when they came to know that the Indians drink only milk and water instead of alcohol. They could not possibly think how one could live without beer. Then offering me a glass of reddish beer that gentleman, who was one Dr. Toshkov, said: "You have taken plenty of water by this time. Now, take it, please, and see how it tastes." I refused with thanks, but they would not let me go without tasting it. They repeated their requests, once, twice and thrice, and at last I had to yield. I sipped not even a spoonful, but it was enough for me to know its bitterness. It was my first and last experience. I am anything but an orthodox, and to speak for myself, I never think that drinking and smoking are great moral offences. But still I am a non-drinker and non-smoker.

After lunch when I took out my money to pay up the bill which was placed on my table, I was simply astonished to hear Dr. Toshkov asking the garcon not to accept the charges from me. In spite of my repeated requests the boy declined to accept any money from me, and when I asked Dr. Toshkov why it was so, he said: "I have asked him to do so. We won't allow you to pay, because you are a guest of our country, and especially when we have the pleasure of acquaintance with you." He further added: "Pay for us if we happen to go to your country." What a



strong sense of hospitality ! Later on I got further proofs of the sense of hospitality and courtesy of the Bulgarians.

It was just four when I reached Dr. Toshkov's house on Pirotka, a principal street of the city. I was invited by the doctor to tea. At his door I was warmly received by him and then conducted to his drawing-room where I had the pleasure of being introduced to his old mother, sister and his wife. Following a short conversation after tea I stood up to say good-bye to the ladies. The doctor accompanied me. The weather was cloudy and it was raining every now and then. So, we hired a horse-cart.

He took me to his sculptor-friend who was said to be the best of all in his profession in Sofia. He kindly showed me round his beautiful works. As neither of us was conversant with each other's tongue, we availed of the services of our common friend. Here I had great pleasure to be introduced to a University-professor of Greek literature. He also had little knowledge of English ; so we began to talk through our doctor friend. We talked a good deal mainly about India and in course of our talk I was astounded to hear from the professor the shocking news of the death of our Poet Gurudev, but happily enough, it was not true. On hearing the news I immediately wanted to see the newspaper. It was not there. He told me that I would not understand anything when I was ignorant of their language. But still I wanted to look

at the news and at last he brought the paper there. While reading the news, the appearance of his face changed. After a moment he looked up and regretfully said : "Beg apology, my friend. I am sincerely very sorry for the false news I have given you." I heaved a sigh of relief and asked : "Then what's the matter with the Poet ?" He said in reply that Dr. Tagore was very seriously ill, he was hovering between life and death. This news of his illness with his photo found great prominence in all Bulgarian dailies. In the news it was stated that his illness was the direct result of his constant worries for money to run his University. So the professor asked me if it were the fact. He could not believe that a man of Dr. Tagore's eminence should have to worry for money for his works. So much love and attachment he had for our Poet that tears were rolling down his cheeks while he was talking with me about his illness. He could not think of any India without Tagore. It has to be admitted that Tagore is held in greater esteem outside than in his own country. It is probably because he is seen through his literature by the foreigners while he is done so by his own people not so much through his works.

Sofia, the capital of the country, is situated on the Vitosha plain which has derived the name from the Vitosha mountain. It is within sight from Sofia. The city can hardly boast of a magnificent building or a beautiful park. In all its appearance an expression of

poverty is vividly noticed. It is a fact, indeed, that the people of the country are very poor, probably the poorest in all Europe. They can ill-afford to pay for pleasures and comforts. It can easily be understood from the fact that there is no asphalted road in the whole of Bulgaria. Such is the economic condition of the people that they can seldom afford to go to a cinema, and a visit to a cinema-house will amply testify to the fact. The charge for a seat in the lowest class of a cinema-house is only six levas or so—a charge which we do not have even in our country, the country of the poorest people,—but still the class seldom becomes full. Industrially, it is the most backward country probably in the whole of Europe, and then it is situated in a continent where every country, particularly the small countries, has to remain ever alert to the international political conditions, and it is why a large portion of the government income is set apart for military purposes; the result is that works for the progress of the country in different spheres suffer from want of adequate funds.

Bulgaria is a small country, having a population of some six million, and it is not very rich in natural resources, but the backwardness of the State in matters economic and political is, in my opinion, entirely due to the foreign rule from which it suffered for centuries. Very few countries will be found in Europe which have suffered from foreign domination for so long a time as Bulgaria has done. Not one or

two centuries, the Bulgarians had been under the Turkish rule for long five centuries and they got some sort of independence only in 1878 and it also was through the benevolent efforts of Tzar Alexander II of Russia who is called in Bulgaria 'Tzar Liberator'. He earned the Bulgarians' gratitude by making them free from the Turkish rule by imposing the San Stefano Treaty ( 3rd March, 1878 ) on Turkey defeated in the Russo-Turkish war. But the Berlin Treaty was made by the Western Powers ( 13th July, 1878 ) shortly after the San Stefano Treaty simply to make the former treaty as regards Bulgaria practically null and void. By that treaty Bulgaria was divided into three parts : (1) Macedonia, (2) Thrace, (3) Bulgaria. Macedonia was returned to the Sultan who promised to introduce reforms there. Thrace, under the name of Eastern Roumelia, was granted autonomy. It was made a point that Turkey should appoint a Christian governor in Thrace. And Bulgaria was granted independence, but it was made tributary to the Porte. This state of things could not exist long. In October, 1908, Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, the elected Prince of Bulgaria, refused to recognise the sovereignty of the Sultan, and thus Bulgaria became fully independent. It is a pity that no one of the monarchs of this country had any Bulgarian blood in him ; even the present ruler Tzar Boris III, who ascended the throne in 1918, has no Bulgarian blood, not even his child has. He is a

German and his wife is an Italian, and so the prince who will inherit the throne is not a Bulgarian, but happily enough, they are Bulgarian from head to foot ; their manners, their outlook—their everything is Bulgarian.

Since Bulgaria became independent, it has made a great stride in almost every sphere, but the progress made in the cultural sphere has surpassed all others. When it became independent in 1878, there was only a petty number (some 1900) of primary schools for the education of the children of the soil. There was no arrangement for higher education of the people at that time while to-day the country has as many as 130 infant schools, 5500 primary schools, 103 secondary schools, 26 special schools, 254 primary and secondary technical schools, 1472 private schools, 1385 high schools, 1 military school, 1 musical academy, 1 academy of fine arts, 1 commercial high school, 1 co-operative high school, 2 teachers' colleges and 2 universities. In that year only 2% of the people could read and write while to-day the percentage of literacy is about 50. And this shows how the country has progressed in the sphere of education even in the teeth of economic difficulties.

The Bulgarians seem to be more Asiatic than European in all their customs and manners, in their modes of living and in their ways of thinking. Take for an example their way of treating guests. In a Bulgarian home a guest is treated first with a glass of

cold water and jam and then with Turkish coffee. Turkish influence is vividly expressed in them and in all their things. They can speak Turkish, their food is Turkish and their ways of treating guests are Turkish, and then they talk like a Turk and think like a Turk. In a word, they are Turkish from top to bottom. Indeed, the Bulgarians are Asiatic; they came from the region of the Azov sea to settle there.

It was the 16th day of September. After halting at Sofia for a day and half I left by the morning train for Plovdiv with a view to going to Stara-Zagora from there by the branch railway. At about mid-day the train reached Plovdiv and I got down there to catch another for Stara-Zagora. In the train I could not know how the time had passed away and it was because I had the

pleasant companionship of Mrs.

**Plovdiv** Uzunova and her company who also were travelling by the same train.

They were returning home. Once again they assured me of a hearty welcome at their house. I halted at Plovdiv for a few hours to visit the city, but they took the corresponding train.

Plovdiv (Philippopolis) is the second largest city in Bulgaria and it is a famous historical city. There is probably no other city which has played so prominent a part in the history of this country from the earliest times as this has done, but still it has hardly anything to impress a foreign traveller. It has nice avenues, all straight, and on both sides of them rows of trees

have been planted, but the roads are not asphalted. It is a famous commercial city and a big railway junction. It lies on the Sofia-Constantinople railway.

At about four I returned to the railway station to catch a train for Stara-Zagora. I was very much depressed to learn from the station master that my through-ticket upto the frontier would be invalid, had I broken my journey there. He asked me if I would be willing to stand the loss of about ten rupees for going to that town. I declined and dropped the idea of going to that town. So, I waited another hour to catch the Express train for Constantinople. In the train I again fell a thinking as to what I should do—whether I should keep my promise by spending ten rupees or not. At long last I decided to keep my word even at a loss of that amount of money. Now I became impatient to break my journey, but could not know where to do that for going to that town. I came out of my compartment to see the railway map hanging on the wall, but it was not intelligible to me. So, I asked a ticket checker, but he made a peculiar gesture impressing upon me that he could not follow my tongue. Hence I turned my attention to the map again. I was becoming more and more restless to get down. At this time came a person from behind and cried “Hallo, Mr. Banerjee ! How do you do ?” I turned back and asked him where I should get down for going to Stara-Zagora, but he could not speak any more English ; probably, his knowledge of English was limited to those

few words, but he was intelligent and clever. He took it from the name of the town that I wanted to go there, and so he impressed upon me by way of gestures that he also was going to that town and that I should accompany him. I took it as a godsend. Just then the train reached a station where we were to get down. We took a corresponding train here. It was a small station. I paid my new friend a note of ten levas for a ticket for Stara-Zagora, apprehending a sore trial for me for my ignorance of Bulgarian, had I gone to buy the ticket. But the gentleman put me to great shame by returning the note with the ticket. When I took out money to pay him the price of the ticket, he vehemently refused to accept, and once again I was struck with wonder to see the sense of hospitality of the Bulgarians. In the train he introduced me to several military students, but none of them could speak English. So we were exchanging ideas by gestures only. In course of our talk the gentleman gave me to understand that he was one of those friends of Dr. Toshkov to whom I was introduced by him the other day in a shop in Sofia. The train was running over a metre gauge railway and it was no better than a goods train.

At about ten the train reached N. Zagora, a small town. It is a railway junction. Here I had to change the train again. The gentleman was a physician, practising in this his native town. He stayed here while I continued my journey. There was ample time yet for



the train's arrival and so I entered the restaurant of the station for dinner, but could not get any food at this late hour of the night.

It was mid-night when I reached Stara-Zagora. It is a very small station. It has practically no waiting-room. The town is about a mile off the station. After a hard struggle I succeeded in making the clerk of the station understand that I wanted to **Stara-Zagora** keep my suit-case there. He received the case and gave me a receipt for it. Now I became relieved of one worry, but could not decide where to pass the cold night. There was no car or carriage at the stand. It was a dark night and so the way was not clearly visible, and I did not know what direction to take to go to the town. Hence I was looking for a guide. At this time a military student, a passenger, who got down there, approached and asked me by gestures if I would be going to the town. I immediately nodded my head and accompanied him. How strange !

Although I am not much of a believer in God, and in fact, I never care to call God even when in danger, I must say with all frankness and sincerity that I feel the presence of a Power especially when I am in a serious difficulty or a danger.

As we stepped into the city, we met a hotel-boy on the street and he took me to his hotel. Thus we were saved from a lot of troubles of finding a hotel at this late hour. I had acknowledged with deepest

gratitude that my unknown friend's help and had heartily thanked him for his great kindness before I bade him good-bye.

It was 'Imperial Hotel' where I put up. I got a furnished room on the 2nd floor. The rent of the room was very cheap ; it was only twenty-five levass amounting more or less to one shilling only.

Next morning I called at the house of Mrs. Uzunova who extended me a very hearty welcome. Hers is a house biggest in the town. Her husband is a physician, running a small private hospital in the compound of his house, and from this hospital he earns a decent income. He is an amiable man, but not so sociable as his wife and daughter. Here I was introduced by Miss. Uzunova to one Mr. Tilchev, a teacher of a school, who happened to be her private tutor some time back. He could speak English quite fluently. I was astonished to hear that he managed to learn the language without the help of any book or a tutor. I was told, he learnt it from gramophone records of English conversations. He was an energetic youngman, very popular among the people of his age. He kindly offered his services at my disposal and I was very happy with his companionship.

Early that morning I had a conversation with Miss. Uzunova through telephone. She informed me that she was very ill. Naturally, I became anxious to see her and immediately called at their house, but happily, I found her not so unwell. She told me that

she was suffering from cold and cough and fever. Though not a physician myself, I saw but little symptoms of which she complained. Although it is no disease to people like myself, it caused her father great anxieties. May be, it was because she was their only child.

Towards evening I went to a small garden near the station. It is not a garden of flowers. It contains only big trees and under them there are benches. Here prevails an atmosphere of loneliness and so I came to enjoy it, but it was not to be. All the boys in the garden approached me as soon as I took my seat at a solitary place. They went on putting questions to me in their own tongue until I left them out of sheer disgust to take my seat at another solitary place. But there too they accompanied me like my shadow. I was a regular curiosity to them. I could not stay there long for them. Then I came to the Municipal garden in the heart of the town, but there too a crowd gathered round me and it was impossible for me to stay there longer. I moved on from the place and got my seat at a solitary corner of the garden. But this place also became soon crowded, as if I were a strange creature. Some of the crowd began making queries of me, but I could not reply to any, simply because none of them was intelligible to me. They were asking me, some in French and some in Bulgarian and Turkish, not even one of which I knew. They were of such a nature that they did not stop even when I made it

perfectly clear that I did not know those languages. At last one gentleman came forward from among them and he was hailed, because he could speak broken English, but sorry, English words also he knew not many. So it was a sore trial for him to interpret me to them. After talking for a few minutes he said ; "Come on, gentleman. Let us go to another garden where the visitors won't trouble you." I hailed this proposal with delight. He took me to a garden of beautiful flowers. It was a new garden, still under construction. The gentleman was a Municipal officer in charge of all the gardens of the town. He was a specialist, I was told, in gardening. He got his education in Paris.

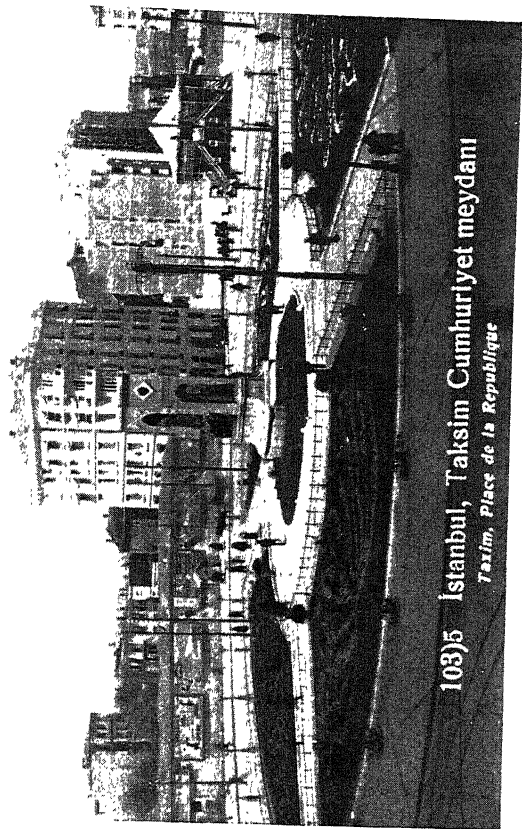
In Bulgaria the people having foreign degrees seem to be respected more. In fact, everywhere in the Continent, even in the most advanced countries of Europe, foreign degrees have a greater fascination for the people, and so the persons having foreign education are looked upon with greater love and respect. Whatever complex it may be called, it prevails more or less everywhere, not to speak of India.

The garden had different kinds of flowers. The gentleman took me round the garden and explained to me what I wanted to know about the cultivation of flowers. He made a nice bunch out of the most beautiful flowers of the garden and offered me as a token of love. Late in the evening I wished him good-night after consenting to accompany him to the hill for a walk early next morning.

Next morning Mr. Assen Subev, that gentleman, called on me and I accompanied him without much delay. The hill stands about a mile off the town. The garden of which I heard so much from him the previous day could not attract me even in the least. It is not a garden in the true sense. It is a hill full of trees ; on its top has been installed a fountain and have been placed several benches under the trees and thus a garden has been made. As a place it is nice, very calm and quiet. I was introduced to the gardener who was there for rearing flower-trees. He was an illiterate fellow, very poor. He had nothing there to treat us with, but anyhow he managed to get some nuts for us to eat. Mr. Subev began breaking them with a big piece of stone and thus we enjoyed the morning in the garden. At about ten we returned to the town. When I told him that it was not possible for me to go with him to his house without keeping my appointment at half past ten, he remarked : "You do not know the character of the Bulgarians. We are never punctual. When we say ten, we mean eleven." It is quite true. He further added : "Last night I told my wife and son about you and they are very curious to see you, because they have never in their life seen an Indian. I have promised them that I shall take you with me this morning." Now I agreed and went with him.

His was a small house, newly constructed. As I reached his house, I was welcome with a smile by his

wife. We shook hands and then I was conducted to their drawing-room. We all sat down round a small table, but I had little talk with Mrs. Subev besides exchanges of smiles and looks. She is a charming lady. In all her smiles and manners I found the simplicity and frankness of a village woman. She sat with us a while and then left us, soon returning with some sweets and coffee to treat me with. She brought for me also a plate of very delicious food like *Payash* which, I was given to understand, she prepared for me. Surely, she would have been very sorry, had I not gone to her house. During our short conversation she asked me thousand and one questions, some by gestures and some through her husband. Now I came to understand what I would have missed, had I not come in contact with this good family. I got many new things to learn from them. They are strict vegetarians and they do not even smoke and drink ale. I was put to shame when they asked me if I were not a vegetarian. They were a bit surprised when I told them that all the Indians are not vegetarians. Thus I spent about half an hour in their midst and then rose to say them, good-bye, but I had to yield to their request to stay a few minutes more for their son who had gone to school. In Bulgaria the school sits in the morning in summer. Just then came back home their son, Mr. Yantcho. He was very happy to see me. Although a boy of only eight or nine, he was not a bit afraid of me, a stranger to them. From his behavi-



Taksim, İstanbul  
Turkey

our it appeared as if I had been known to him for a long, long time. He caught me by hand and took me to their drawing-room from outside where I was waiting for him. He began calling me 'uncle' and he drew from me the affection of an uncle. As I had an engagement to attend, I took leave of them without further delay after accepting their invitation to lunch next day. I was late by about an hour to attend the engagement, and so I begged the gentleman to excuse me for the delay, and then I cut a joke with a smile by saying: "The Bulgarian time, I have been told, is always one hour behind ours, and so you can not say that I am late by one hour." At this he laughed and said: "No, friend, you are not correct. We are always late by only half an hour." I replied: "Then it means almost the same thing." The Bulgarians are so very unpunctual that even the picture-houses have to commence their shows after half an hour, sometimes even one hour, of the advertised time, otherwise the halls find no visitors.

At lunch-time I entered a big restaurant, quite close to my hotel. A waiter came to me and I asked him to bring meat-soup, chicken-curry and a few slices of bread, but he could not understand me. He wanted me to show them in the menu which I failed to do, because it was written in Bulgarian and French. So, I was looking for some one to help me. Then came up to me a youngman from another table and he asked the waiter to bring what I told him. The youngman



was taking his meal with his mother and sister. He could speak English. He was a student of the American College of Sofia. He was not a native of the town, he came from a place about fifteen miles away from the town to catch a train for Sofia where he was going to attend his college after the summer vacation. His mother and sister came to see him off. They came in their car.

I had to pay only fifteen levas for my food. So cheap things are in Bulgaria! The student did not return to his table. With the permission of his mother he came to take the remaining of his food at my table. After lunch his mother and sister left him with me to see a relative of theirs. They asked him to go direct to the station. I was very glad to see such friendly attitude of theirs towards me, a stranger to them. My new acquaintance was very helpful to me. He gladly agreed to accompany me to the police-station to interpret me when I asked him to do so. There I was required to report about the date of my arrival and departure in and from the country. I required also a permit in my passport without which I would not be allowed to leave the country.

It was only ten minutes before the train's departure that we reached the railway station, but even then we could not find his mother and sister there. We thought that they had not come up there yet, but after a while a gentleman came and informed us that his mother and sister had gone back to the city for us.

We at once began to run, and on the way we met them. His mother grew terribly angry with him. She began to rebuke him in the loudest of her voice and he was so afraid that he could speak no word. It was probably worse than beating for him. He could not raise his face. He stood still for a few minutes and then entered the car without a word. He could not even dare come to say good-bye to me. I became sincerely very sorry for being the cause of this trouble, but I wonder how she could behave like that in a public street before a foreigner.

Next noon I reached the house of Mr. Subev just in time for lunch. At the door of his house I was warmly received by him and his wife and son. Immediately I was conducted to the dining-hall and we sat around a small table. They had no cook, and so she brought all her preparations herself in different plates and kept them on the table and then sat with us to take meal. We began to help ourselves. There were many items, all vegetable, of course. There were vegetable soup, fried potatoes, curries and then *polao* within a big green chilli and so many other things. It was really a sumptuous lunch.

After our meal Mr. Yantcho took his violin to play on, and I was so happy to hear it. He placed a book of tunes on a stand and then played on. Although I have not even an alphabetical knowledge of this art, I heard him with the keenest interest. It is a subject taught even in the primary schools in Bulgaria. But

in India I find the absence of arrangements for the cultivation of the art not only in the primary and high schools but even in the colleges. In my humble opinion, everyone should have opportunities to cultivate the particular science or art in which he is interested most from his very boyhood.

After playing he came and sat by me and I thanked him heartily. Then I was engaged in talk with him. He was ignorant of English and so he was exchanging his ideas with me often by gestures and sometimes through his father. He was a jolly boy. In course of our conversation he suddenly rose up to draw my notice to an elephant in a calender and then impressed upon me by a gesture that I should take an Indian elephant for him from India next time when I should visit them. At this we all burst into a laugh, but he was not a bit depressed. He returned to me and asked me again if really I would be true to my word. I nodded and he was dam glad.

The same day I invited them to a cinema, and accordingly they all three called on me at my lodge. I accompanied them without delay, but I was astonished when I was informed that the show would be commencing half an hour later. The time was changed, simply because the visitors did not come up yet in large numbers. However, in time we went to buy tickets. As the booking-clerk did not know English, Mr. Subev talked with him on my behalf. He gave me three tickets, but refused to accept the price from me.

It was because Mr. Subev asked him to do so. He himself paid the price. At this I felt insulted and when I was about to leave the cinema-house, Mr. Subev caught my hand and asked me not to mind anything. He said : "You are our guest, and so, on no account can we permit you to pay either for us or for yourself. Do likewise when we shall visit your country. We won't object then." So saying he took me to the hall.

Next day was the Grapes Festival day of the Bulgarians. I was invited by some new friends to a dancing-hall of the town. As I had no work to do that evening, I was glad to accept their invitation. It is a day when even the family members dance and when husbands and wives enjoy freedom to dance with any one they like. It is purely a social function. While some of us were chatting and eating our dinners, others were dancing with their friends and fiancailles. At the dining table I was introduced to a friend of my friend who happened to be a university-student. He had no knowledge of English, and so he was talking with me through our common friend who happened to know English fairly well. In course of our talk he requested me to drop cards now and then and said : "I request you to write at least one card, if not more, from India. I would like to show my friends and professors your card and I would feel proud to tell them that I have a friend even in far off India." Such earnest desire for making friendship with the

foreigners exists more or less in many a heart everywhere.

The following day, the 19th September, I decided to leave the country for Turkey by the evening train. Accordingly I reached the station about fifteen minutes earlier to catch the train. As I entered the station, I was greeted by all my new friends who came to see me off. Mr. Subev and his wife and son also came there. They brought for me two big bunches of beautiful flowers and a basket of grapes. Really, they made a profound impression upon me by their sense of hospitality and courtesy and above all by their love. It was a touching scene when I said them goodbye. They kept looking at me as long as I was within their sight.

At Rakovski I changed the train and took the Express for Istanbul. In the train I met a young Chinese couple. They were returning home from London after completing their courses of studies.

# TURKEY

Early next morning, it was the 20th day of September, the train entered the central station of Constantinople, now called Istanbul. I took a taxi-cab, and on my way to the hotel I stopped for cashing a few travellers' cheques in Ottoman Bank, the Government Bank of Turkey. I got only 604 kurus for £1. Of course, the exchange-rate always fluctuates.

It was 'Grand Hotel Novotny' where I put up. Although a big hotel, its rooms were not so well furnished. For a single-bedded room I had to pay 175 kurus a day. It was too much even in comparison to the charges in Europe proper. For my meal I used to go to restaurants. Food-charges also are very high, and so, the cost of living of a foreigner in Turkey is very dear, even dearer than that in England.

Istanbul is a big city. It has a population of about a million. It stands on several hills. Taxim is the best of localities in the city. Here stands a monument in memory of the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Most of the modern buildings of the city are here.

It is an old city, one of the dirtiest cities of Turkey. Its buildings are old and its streets are narrow—so narrow that a motor-car has to go over the footpath when tram passes. And then, the streets are not

asphalted. There is practically no park or open ground in the city where one can breathe fresh air. But inspite of all these the city looks charming when viewed from the sea or from Hyderpasa on the opposite shore of the Strait that divides Asia and Europe. It takes only ten to fifteen minutes to cross the Strait between Istanbul where ends Europe and Hyderpasa where begins Asia. It looks queen-like in the evening when lights in the city from the top of the hill to the bottom and in boats in the sea are lit. Between Istanbul and Hyderpasa steam-launches always ply. Hyderpasa is a small town.

In Europe Turkey has a small territory, but as a traveller comes to the Asiatic side of Turkey from the European side, he finds a striking contrast between the two. European Turkey has a fertile soil while Asiatic Turkey has only a barren one—so barren that hardly a tree comes to notice even within a radius of hundred miles. Then, the houses in the villages of European Turkey are buildings almost without an exception, but the houses of the villagers of Asiatic Turkey are not. Economically, the Turks on the European side are much better off, but their brethren in Asiatic Turkey are very poor. They are ill-clad and many of them have not even houses to live in. The nature even seems to be not in their favour. The entire Asiatic Turkey is a vast tract of barren land. At long distances small villages occur and the villagers find it very difficult to keep in touch

with their brethren of other villages and towns simply because of absence of modern communication systems in the interior of the country. How difficult, therefore, it must be to live in a desert! Eastern Turkey and Western Turkey present two pictures, quite different from each other, although they belong to the same fatherland. One is full of life while the other seems to be struggling hard to eke out an existence.

I became very much tired due to my long journey with only a few short halts at certain important places between London and Istanbul, and so after two days' complete rest at Istanbul I left the city for Ankara by the evening train. It was the 22nd September. In the station there was a posse of policemen, and so, out of curiosity I asked one of them why they were there in so large a number. He whispered into my ears in reply that His Excellency Ataturk would be going to Ankara. There was a small special train for him in the station. Out of curiosity I peeped in from outside, but found hardly anything to be impressed with. There were only two compartments for him. It was certainly not like a special train for our governors. It was probably because he was not much acquainted with our governors or their chief, otherwise he also could display such aristocracy as is done by our Lords at the expense of the State.

The shocking news of the untimely death of Kemal Ataturk comes to me when I am penning these few



lines about Turkey. He has left us to mourn his loss at a time when we needed him most. It is an immense loss not only to Asia but to the whole world at large.

Modern Turkey seems to be an entirely new country, and the maker of this country was Kemal Atatürk whose glorious achievements have won him universal admiration and an undying fame. Personally, he broke through all prejudices and superstitions and he induced his country to do the same thing. He is the saviour of Turkish women who had been crying for freedom for centuries past. To-day the women of Turkey are as smart as any western woman and they are as active as any woman in this world. They have bobbed their hair and have adopted the European costume. To-day they are entitled to every right and privilege as their brothers are. Socially and politically, they have advanced beyond expectation, and the great progress of the country in different spheres has been possible only for their active co-operation.

The Turks, Muslims though they are, are not at present very particular about going to mosques for prayer, and they have no more attachment for their fej cap, once a favourite cap of the Turks. The Turks have closed down mosques for educational institutions and they have banished the fej cap from their country. Other Muslim countries also are following in the footprints of Turkey in many respects. Many Turks drink alcohol publicly, but they are no

more despised for that in the society. At present they view the life not as the Asiatic people do but as the Europeans do.

In the train I had a very bitter experience. In one station I got down for some eatables to buy, and when I returned to my compartment, I found my seat occupied by a stout old chap. He removed my coat from the seat and kept it on the bunk. However, as there was no seat vacant, I stood on the passage hoping that he would make room for me after eating his meal. He was eating and eating, drinking and drinking, and I was afraid if he would be able to finish at all his meal in that whole night. I waited long three hours, and then, unable to stand any longer I requested him by a gesture to make a little room for me. But at this he flew to rage and began to abuse me in slang, often showing temper. A very bad smell was coming from his mouth and it was impossible for me to stand before him. I moved back a few steps and then entreated him not to be so angry, but with every word of mine his voice went louder and louder. What a beast a man becomes when under the influence of alcohol! However, then came there two young military students. One of them, fortunately, knew English. I told him all about the matter and he pleaded with him in their tongue, but he was not the man to yield to reason.

Early next morning the train reached Ankara. The building of the station was yet under construction and

it was nearing completion. It is an impressive building, bearing an excellent architecture.

After keeping my suit-case in the cloak-room I left for the city. The city lies about a mile off the station. I walked on along the principal road. It is a beautiful avenue, undoubtedly the finest of avenues I have seen in Europe and Asia. There are two **Ankara** broad roads side by side and between the two lies a garden. And then, on both sides of the roads and footpaths stand rows of shady trees.

As I was about to enter the city, I was stopped by a policeman in a civil suit who took me to his chief. He asked me numerous questions and then permitted me to enter the city after taking note of my passport.

It was 'Sebat Oteli' where I put up. I got a small room for 100 Kurus. Although ignorant of Turkish, I had no difficulty to find out a hotel in the city, because the signboards are all written in Roman alphabets. When I saw 'Oteli' in a signboard, I took it for a hotel, and it was, indeed, a hotel.

The order for the use of Roman alphabets in place of theirs was received in Turkey with mixed feelings. There is still a section of public opinion in favour of the use of their own scripts. In my humble opinion, the mere use of Roman characters is of little use to the benefit of a nation. How much can it help different peoples speaking different languages to understand one another even if they write their languages in one common script? A Japanese who can write his tongue

in Roman alphabets will not possibly be better understood by an Indian than his brother who knows no Roman alphabets. Similarly, a Turk who writes his tongue in Roman alphabets will be possibly as much understood as his brother, who knows only their alphabets, will be by one ignorant of Turkish. To say more clearly, possibly not even a single syllable of a German book will be intelligible to one knowing Roman alphabets but not German language, although it is written in Roman scripts. So, the mere use of Roman alphabets does not help the nations much to understand one another. It is only a common language which can help us to attain our object, but the adoption of a common language all over the world may not be possible for a long, long time to come. There is one great disadvantage in the adoption of a new script. If it is adopted, all the works of the famous authors, to say in a word, the entire past history will have to be re-written in new scripts. It is an impossible task. If not written, they will remain hidden from view of the new generations. So, the easiest and best way of attaining the common object, in my opinion, is the adoption of a common language. Local languages, of course, should remain as they are.

Ankara is not a very big city. Its population is nearly one hundred thousand. It is the new capital of the Republic. It lies almost in the centre of Asiatic Turkey. It is still under construction. It stands on small barren hills in the heart of a big desert. When

I picked up a conversation with his friend who happened to be an Iraqi. By the way, he asked me about my impression of Istanbul. He was greatly disappointed to hear that the city could not impress me at all. He was not happy when I described it as a dirty city. He was not ready to hear it. Now I asked him about his impression of Istanbul and in reply he described it as the most beautiful city in whole Asia. He asked me if there were any other city more beautiful than Istanbul. And then he wanted to know why I described it as a dirty city. I said in reply : "To me a dirty city is that which has narrow roads and lanes, unclean and unpaved, and has no modern buildings, parks or gardens."

The night passed and the day came, but the train was running as fast as before through the deserts. This day I made acquaintance with a Swedish girl who was going to Baghdad. Once I was cracking my fingers while talking with her. She immediately drew my attention to it and remarked with a smile : "It is an Oriental habit, I see."

At mid-night the train reached Aleppo in Syria and here it stopped. Next morning I left the city for India via Damascus, Baghdad and Basrah, hoping to reach Bombay on the 9th October, 1937. I returned to my sweet motherland with a new ambition for a greater adventure.

**End**

treated by its Government. Shortly time will come when, I think, the Government will come to senses about their misdeeds and when they will request the Jews to return to their fatherland."

That evening while going to Hamstead Hill I met several Chinese students who also were proceeding towards the same. They were talking about the war going on in their country. At that time the Sino-Japanese war was an important topic of discussion everywhere—in the parks and streets, hotels and restaurants and offices. And the sympathy of the average people always went with the ill-fated Chinese. At a time when the public were much perturbed over the massacre of the unarmed civil population of China by the invaders, news of some provocative nature about the war often found extra-ordinary prominence in the London press. Except such occasions practically no news of the East, especially of India, can claim for a place in the British dailies. One can, however, find some tit-bits of Indian news sometimes in 'The Times', the best of British dailies. When I make a comparative study of newspapers, I find the British newspapers, I must confess with all sincerity, much inferior even to some of our Indian dailies like "The Times of India", although I doubt not about the larger circulations of the British dailies. More news of the world are found in the Indian dailies and they are given more prominence than the local news of the country while we find quite the opposite in the